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CONTRACT BRIDGE
BLUE BOOK

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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CONTRACT BRIDGE AT A GLANCE

**CONTRACT BRIDGE FOR
AUCTION PLAYERS**

**CULBERTSON'S OWN
CONTRACT BRIDGE SELF-TEACHER**

CONTRACT IN TEN MINUTES

**CULBERTSON'S OWN
LEADS AND PLAYS SELF-INSTRUCTOR**

CONTRACT BRIDGE BLUE BOOK

by
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The British Bridge World
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One Hundred Contract Bridge Hands
Contract Whist
etc.

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**TO MY WIFE
AND FAVOURITE PARTNER**

PREFACE

ALTHOUGH PERIODICAL improvements in the *Contract Bridge Blue Book* are now anticipated by the Bridge-loving public, the reader, of course, remembers that however much a succeeding edition may differ from a previous one in that it may be revised, modified and improved *as a book*, the Culbertson System of bidding, which forms the basis of these pages, remains unchanged in its principles and essential methods, with the exception, of course, that with the increase in knowledge of bidding principles, refinements and additions of one kind or another may be included. Thus the time and mental effort expended by the reader in digesting any edition of the *Blue Book* represents for him a permanent investment, for he has been grounded in the scientific principles underlying the very structure both of cards themselves and of the highly intellectual game of Contract Bridge. The principles that were true in 1923, that were basic in 1928, are still true in 1934 and will be ten years or a generation from now.

This, the 1934 edition of the *Contract Bridge Blue Book*, is the most complete exposition of Contract Bridge bidding ever published. Almost every conceivable question that may arise in connection with the bidding of a hand is simply, but fully and logically treated. Every part of the book is made easily accessible through the complete index with references and cross-references. The glossary is the most comprehensive ever compiled or printed in a Bridge book.

The Blue Book has been translated into all the Euro-

pean languages, including Russian, and a Japanese edition is in preparation. More than two hundred works on Bridge authorized by this author without charge and published by other authors have been based on the Blue Book. In America and abroad four thousand teachers have found a new, dignified and remunerative occupation in teaching the Culbertson System to an average of one million pupils yearly. In order to protect both the public and the really qualified teachers, the Culbertson International Studios issue Certificates to teachers after a careful test which assures at least an indispensable minimum of Bridge knowledge for teaching.

The various Systems of Bridge, such as the Official System and the Vanderbilt (Combination) System, have recognized and embodied in their codes the basic principles and methods of the Culbertson System. It can be truthfully stated that the learning or teaching of Contract Bridge to-day is not possible without a thorough knowledge of the Culbertson System.

It may interest the reader to know something about the technical organization behind the Culbertson System. The average daily mail of questions on the Culbertson System is between five hundred and a thousand letters. A staff of experts, most of whom are ranked as the world's greatest players, are kept busy analysing proposed improvements in the Culbertson System. Suggestions are solicited and received from various parts of the world. They are then submitted to the scrutiny of the experts; any suggestion having merit is put to the acid test of actual playing conditions among experts for the period of a year. Only a few such 'improvements'

survive to be incorporated in the Culbertson System. Whenever this happens, proper credit is given. Everything that has been suggested in the field of Contract Bridge, everything that is being advocated by any writer or player, has been scrutinized and tested. Bridge players may therefore feel reasonably certain that if any method is not included in the Culbertson System it is because it has been discarded after a decisive test.

The Approach System of Auction and its brother, the Approach-Forcing System of Contract, resulted from the writer's researches into the modern theory of cards, begun several years ago. The principles and practical methods outlined in this book embody the results of these researches, and have been meticulously verified under conditions of severest competition. They have stood the acid test of experience, as is proved by the fact that the Culbertson¹ System has been adopted by the overwhelming majority of advanced players and clubs throughout the world, and its methods incorporated, wholly or in part, in scores of books.

The Blue Book is written primarily for the advanced and master players, from the standpoint of Championship and foolproof Bridge. To enable the beginner and the inexperienced player to grasp the vital factors resulting from the reasoning processes of the expert, but without going through those reasoning processes himself, a number of simple but indispensable rules have

¹ Practically all the world's greatest experts make use of the the Culbertson Approach-Forcing principles with or without slight individual variations. A few writers make use of the name 'One Over One'. Such a name is exactly synonymous with the name 'Approach-Forcing' and does not designate a different system.

been laid down in the first seventy-six pages. The importance of such fundamentals as the Rule of Eight, the 4-5-6 Count for no-trump bids, the Distributional Count for suit Raises, and others, cannot be overestimated, for there is no player, however great, who does not make use of them consciously or subconsciously. As the player's knowledge increases, these rules become part of his blood, so to speak—they become, in other words, automatic or second nature. A player who carefully studies the Blue Book will see that the real Culbertson System begins with Chapter VI. From this point on, both the inexperienced and the master player are treading common ground. While all questions are treated from the standpoint of expert play, the subject is presented in a manner that makes it thoroughly understandable even to average players. It is the author's sincerest hope that the reader, having finished the Blue Book, will have acquired such a power of independent analysis that the book is no longer necessary.

Next to the compliments from my friends—too many of whom, alas! are but average players—my reward lies in the enthusiastic praise of most of the master players, who admit that the text of the Blue Book represents their own subconscious methods and has laid down the modern scientific basis of Contract Bridge. It teaches a great player to be an even *greater* player.

The *Contract Bridge Blue Book* is divided into four inter-related parts, as follows:

- Book I. BIDDING VALUATION.
- Book II. PARTNERSHIP LANGUAGE.
- Book III. DISTRIBUTION AND HIGHER STRATEGY.
- Book IV. BRIDGE PSYCHOLOGY.

The book is arranged to meet the needs of all classes of players from the veriest tyro to the expert. The master player will find his more or less subconscious store of knowledge analytically formulated throughout this work, especially in Books II, III and IV. In fact, it is likely that the average player and even the beginner, when they have mastered the elements of Valuation and Partnership Language in Books I and II, will, in a few hours of concentrated reading, have learned what would otherwise require years of trial and error. The finer tools of an expert can only be forged in terms of Plastic Valuation, Psychology and Partnership Inferences.

As a system, the Culbertson System remains, for 1934, practically identical with that of 1933, except for minor refinements and additions and more detailed discussion of some methods from the standpoint of the expert player. There is no better proof of the essential soundness and efficiency of the system than in the fact that the '1934 model' is practically the same as the '1933 model', and that no matter how many 'new systems' continue to appear, those who try them flock back, ultimately, to the *Contract Bridge Blue Book*.

A few 'new' ideas presented by various players in 1933 were tested and rejected either as being unsound from the standpoint of expert play or as being incorrect from the standpoint of theory. Take, for instance, the 'no-trump mania' which gained for a short time a certain popularity with 'old school' players. It was, of course, impossible that I would consider at any time incorporating such unsound principles in a book of Contract bidding. Equally ridiculous and even more unsound are the absurdly weak Third and Fourth Hand bids advo-

cated by a small school of players. Such bids, basically false, brought to their users inevitable trouble, and the weakness of these bids has piled up appalling losses for their users.

The principal additions to this edition of *The Blue Book* are:

1. A complete exposition of the lead-directing Double—the most effective weapon for defeating adverse Slam bids.

2. A discussion of the wisdom of reopening the bidding Fourth Hand after an adverse Opening bid has been passed by two succeeding players.

3. The adoption of the principle that, on hands of minimum strength, suits should not be reversed in the bidding to show a lower ranking suit of greater length.

4. A more complete definition and exposition of the principle of the Forcing Pass.

5. A complete classification of the semi-Forcing Bids.

6. An explanation of the proper responses to Opening one-bids with a part-score.

7. A new Appendix discusses the adjustment of the System to Duplicate play on the Match Point basis.

I have paused in the difficult task of completing the *Red Book of Leads and Plays* to make the necessary revision in the *Contract Bridge Blue Book*. The field of leads and plays is virtually virgin territory. Writers both here and abroad have left this department of modern Contract Bridge practically untouched. For the most part, devotees of the modern game of Contract are using the precepts handed down by those who were experts in the tactical principles governing the play of a hand of Whist

—principles which do not suffice for the more scientific game of Contract Bridge.

Contract Bridge is the world's greatest intellectual pastime. It requires principles of play peculiar to itself, just as it has developed its own principles of bidding. The principles set forth in the *Red Book of Leads and Plays* will meet the requirements of Contract, and, I feel certain, will not only enlighten and entertain the student, but will improve his game to such a marked degree that the Culbertson System of leads and plays will be as revolutionary as the Culbertson System of bidding was after its first publication in 1930.

The writer takes this opportunity to acknowledge his indebtedness, for valuable suggestions and assistance in developing the Approach System of Auction and the Forcing System of Contract, to Messrs. Theodore A. Lightner and Michael T. Gottlieb (with Mrs. Culbertson, his team-mates in the world championship match for the Charles M. Schwab Trophy, which they won in 1933), and also to Messrs. Oswald Jacoby, Louis H. Watson, Samuel Fry, Jr., and Waldemar von Zedtwitz, analysts, who must be included in all lists of the world's ten or fifteen master players.

Grateful appreciation is also due to Mr. R. F. Foster, Mrs. Lelia Hattersley, Mr. Harold S. Vanderbilt, Mr. Milton C. Work, the late Wilbur C. Whitehead and other writers too numerous to mention, who at various times have introduced to the public, wholly or in part, this author's theoretical and practical researches on Auction and Contract (with proper acknowledgment of their source). The writer is particularly indebted, for invaluable technical advice and co-operation, to Mr.

William J. Huske, editor of *The Bridge World Magazine* to Mr. Louis H. Watson, former technical editor, and to Mr. Albert Morehead, present technical editor. To Messrs. William B. Tower, Jr., Lewis Copeland, Lloyd E. Smith and the Office Staff are due sincere thanks for their loyal assistance in the preparation of this book. To Mr. Walter Malowan, foreign editor of *The Bridge World*, I am grateful for his work in supervising the preparation of foreign editions.

My wife, Josephine Culbertson, has done more than assist and co-operate. Only her extreme diffidence explains why her name does not appear as co-author, as indeed it should. To her keen analytical mind, delicate sense of balance and comprehensive knowledge of Contract, equally brilliant as regards both its theoretical and its practical aspects, I owe many of the important ideas of the Approach-Forcing System. In fact, without her tireless co-operation, the task of contributing toward the building up of this most subtle, scientific and profound intellectual game, in which millions have found a new source of enjoyment and mental rest from their everyday worries and preoccupations, would not have been adequately, if at all, accomplished.

ELY CULBERTSON

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BOOK I
BIDDING VALUATION

CHAPTER I

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

THE TRICK is the measuring-rod of all plays and bids in Bridge. Each trick in turn is measured on the basis of points. Ability to contract for and to deliver a great number of tricks—eleven in a minor suit, ten in a major suit, and nine at no-trump—is rewarded with special game and rubber bonuses, in addition to the trick points. Ability to contract for and to deliver a very great number of tricks—twelve and thirteen at a Slam declaration—carries still another reward. Failure to deliver the number of tricks contracted for is punished by simple and doubled penalties. Finally, as a survival of the eighteenth century's curtesy to Lady Luck, there are special premiums for rare combinations of honours. *Points* is therefore the stake for which we play in Bridge, the final criterion of any bid or play or method. The biggest gambler or the player (fortunately in the overwhelming majority) who plays for the sheer intellectual delight of the game must both conform to the single yardstick—points.

In Contract, as in all card games of skill, a balanced system of rewards and penalties regulates the rhythm of the game and profoundly influences its methods and strategy. Penalties limit the overbidding by punishing its excess; game and Slam premiums check the underbidding and indirectly exact a heavy toll from the timorous and the passive. Contract rhythm is inexorable: on one side you are mercilessly goaded into frenzied activity lest your opponents rob you of premiums; on the other side you are bullied at every step by the Demon of Penalties.

So the hapless player, who, in quest of 'the best bid', embarks upon the treacherous seas of Distribution, is forced to navigate in the very narrow channel of mathematical game and penalty equivalents.

MATHEMATICAL REALITIES BEHIND THE SCORE
SHEET

The advice to 'watch the score' is not half as important as to know precisely what takes place in the invisible profit-and-loss column *behind* the score. Until the final score is added up there is a tremendous difference between the apparent point values as scored on the sheet and the actual profit or loss. Players A and B, who bid and make four-odd in spades, score 120 points below the line—their actual gain, however, is mathematically about 400 points; similarly, a penalty of 200 points scored above the line is a serious loss to the 'victors' when obtained in exchange for a game.

Since the mathematical ratio between the relative premium and penalty profits determines the fundamental choice of playing at one's own or one's partner's bid as against the adverse bid, it is vital to have, at every stage of the bidding, a clear conception of what one is really playing for.

THE THEORY OF PROBABILITIES IN SCORING

An estimate of the real value of any game involves calculation of simple probabilities to determine the *equity value* (mathematical expectation) of the rubber premium.

The bonus of 700 points for winning two straight games and of 500 points for winning two games out of three are equivalent to the award of 200 points to the side winning the first game as a game premium, and of 200 points as a game premium, and *in addition* 300 points as a rubber bonus, to the side winning any two games.

The side that wins the first game gains in addition to its game premium of 200 points an *equity value* in the 300 point rubber bonus. This equity value is worth 150 points, a figure computed from the fact that the side which wins the first game has three out of a total of four chances of winning the rubber; in other words, it acquires the value of a three-to-one expectation of getting the 600 point 'pot' (the 300 point rubber bonus theoretically put up by each side), which is equal to 450 points. Deducting 300 points, which represent

the player's own stake in the 'pot', we have left 150 points—a mathematical equity value in the rubber premium accruing to the side that wins its first game. The *total value* of any first game won is counted as follows:

Assume that four spades are bid and made. We have 120 points for the four-odd tricks; 200 points for the game premium; and 150 points of *equity value* in the rubber bonus. Total, 470 points. However, inasmuch as the vulnerable side will necessarily make fewer game contracts than the non-vulnerable side, the actual *equity value* in the 300 point rubber premium is closer to 100 points than to 150 points. Hence the approximate total value of winning the first game is about 420 points.

The same method applies in estimating the value of the second game to the side that previously won the first game, except that the balance of the equity value for the second game will now be 200 points, which makes the total value of the second game about 520 points.

The same approximate values of games can be reached by a statistical method rather than by mathematical probabilities. The average value of a Contract Bridge rubber, on the basis of 3000 rubbers recorded by the author, is 960 points. A player who wins the first game wins 'half' of the rubber, or 480 points. Deduct about 50 points for the decreased chances of scoring the second game when vulnerable and you get 430 points—roughly the average value of the first game.

THE MATHEMATICAL POINT VALUE OF GAMES

Any first game is worth rather more than 400 points, including the trick-score. It follows that the side which, to save the first game of a rubber, incurs a penalty of 450 points (3 tricks doubled, not vulnerable), suffers but a slight loss. Such a loss is more than justified when one considers that in many instances the opponents, instead of doubling, attempt instead a contract that cannot be fulfilled: to say nothing of the occasions when the opponents score only an undoubled penalty for the overbid.

Any second game to the same side (when the opponents have not won a game) is worth rather more than 500 points, including the trick-score. It follows that a penalty of 3 tricks doubled, incurred by the non-vulnerable side (450 points) to save the second game of a rubber, will show a profit.

Any third (rubber) game is worth 600 points, including the trick-score. It follows that to suffer a penalty of 2 tricks doubled when vulnerable (500 points), in order to save the third game of a rubber, is profitable. However, the risk of incurring on doubtful hands a serious loss of 3 tricks doubled (900 points) makes it advisable not to overbid deliberately by more than 1 trick when vulnerable.

THE MATHEMATICAL POINT VALUE OF A PART-SCORE

A part-score helps a player to bid and make a certain number of games which otherwise would not be attainable. In addition there is the psychological factor of nervous tension induced in the opponents. The writer's statistics (not very reliable) indicate that roughly 15 to 20 per cent of the games won are secured because of a part-score. Since a game is worth between 400 and 500 points the *equity value* of a part-score is roughly worth 100 points in addition to the trick-score itself. Thus, assuming the North-South side to have scored 60 points, their net profit is:

	60 points— <i>visible trick-score</i>
About	<u>100 points—<i>game equity</i></u>
About	160 points— <i>total profit</i>

It follows that a loss of from 100 to 200 penalty points to prevent the opponents from securing a part-score results in about an even break. A loss of 200 points (1 trick doubled, vulnerable) is amply justified even when the counter-gain of a part-score is mathematically but 160 points. Risking a loss of even 250 points (2 tricks doubled, not vulnerable) will more often than not prove to be profitable, considering that the opponents will hesitate to double a contract which, if made, will score game, and that frequently the opponents, instead of passing or doubling, will be pushed up to a con-

tract that cannot be made. This invisible gain is the mainstay of a skilful overbidder in all situations.

It is a fallacy to distinguish between the visible score sheet and mathematical gains as 'sure' and 'potential', respectively. Every new deal is an independent event offering exactly even chances (other factors being equal), and the so-called 'potential' gains will be realized even after a small number of deals. On the other hand, the so-called 'sure' gains are not in the pocket for long, since at the very next deal a player is forced to put up again his previous gains, and perhaps at weaker odds. This fallacy of 'sure' gains accounts for a great deal of disastrous 'rubber-grabbing'—disastrous because, on the reasoning of a fantastic analogy dealing vaguely with birds and bushes, a penalty equal to or even greater than its value is frequently given up for a shot at the 'sure' rubber—a shot which may very easily miss.

CHOOSING BETWEEN A GAME AND PENALTY EQUIVALENTS OR VICE VERSA

First Principle: As between premiums at one's own bid and penalizing the opponents, prefer the penalty even though it may be slightly less than the mathematical equivalent of game. The reason for this choice lies in the structure of plays. A Penalty Double, as a rule, is based at least upon a margin of a 2-trick set. Attempts to make game, however precisely bid for, cannot, as a rule, be based upon any such margin of safety; involving a larger element of guesswork than Doubles, they are more subject to 'distributional accidents' (ruffs, bad breaks, etc.). Furthermore, a Penalty Double may easily bring a larger profit than is possible with a game premium.

Second Principle: As between allowing the opponents to score premiums at their own bids and forcing them through 'sacrifice bids' to accept a proportionate penalty, *prefer the latter*, as a rule. Even when the 'sacrifice penalty' may be slightly in excess of the adverse premium saved there is an advantage in so doing. This principle of deliberate overbidding, which for so many years has been held by experts

in utter contempt under the name of 'flag-flying', is highly valued as one of the mainstays of the Culbertson System for experts.

These tactics may be summarized as follows:

1. When neither side is vulnerable, prefer a Penalty Double to your own game if you can set the opponents at least 3 tricks.
2. When your side is vulnerable and the opponents are not vulnerable, prefer a second game unless you can set the opponents 3 or more tricks doubled.
3. When both sides are vulnerable, prefer a Penalty Double if you are reasonably certain of setting the opponents 2 tricks.

But whenever it is reasonably certain that the opponents will score a game or a part-score, as well as when it is *practically* certain that the opponents will score a Small Slam, the scientific (and therefore 'tough') player will overbid and overbid to the full mathematical equivalent of the value of the saved game, part-score or even Small Slam. Skill in the delicately nuanced art of overbidding is indispensable in winning Bridge.¹

Players who deliberately sacrifice 450 points in penalties, to prevent their opponents from scoring the first game of a rubber, lose but slightly more than they would lose otherwise. Superficially there may seem to be no sense in risking a penalty since the opponents can score its equivalent in premiums. Actually, however, with a very large percentage of hands the opponents, instead of accepting the penalty, choose to bid higher—only to fail. Here we have the key to scientific overbidding: thousands of hands can make three-but not four-odd, or four- but not five-odd, and so on up.

¹ It is here that the difference between men and women in Bridge is most striking—perhaps because it reaches the roots of biological differences. Men, as a rule, will overbid, and women will underbid. Unfortunately most men will drive the sword of overbidding not only up to the hilt but will plunge in the handle as well; and most women players will equally abuse the inherently sound principle of conservatism by using the sword of overbidding as though it were meant only to inflict pin-pricks.

The advantage of deliberately forcing the opponents to the breaking-point of their hands, is, therefore, tremendous. For instance, an ultra-conservative player allows the opponents to bid and score four spades vulnerable—a loss of, say, 600 points. Had he bid five hearts the opponents, hoping to profit more by taking the game bid up to five spades, are set 1 trick—showing a net profit of 700 points to the overbidder. Had they chosen to double and had they set the contract by 1 trick vulnerable they would have scored 200 points, leaving still a net profit of 400 points. It is true that the opponents may eventually win *this* rubber but, mathematically speaking, they actually win *two* rubbers with the important difference that the 'first' rubber cost the overbidder only 200 points.

THE OBJECT OF SCIENTIFIC BIDDING

The mathematical ratios of premiums and penalties automatically determine bidding aims.

First Object: Penalties.

The first object should be not to be unduly penalized (safety first) and to manœuvre the opponents into a penalty roughly equivalent to, or greater than, the possible premium to be scored at one's own bid.

The profit from game premiums is naturally limited. Not so with possible penalties.

With thousands of good players, failure to understand the overwhelming importance of this first object results in narrow, crippled 'game-grabbing' tactics. Penalties are accepted almost reluctantly, as second meats, and sweeping movements for wider penalty swings are practically excluded from the bidding scheme. Naturally, when the opponents are not vulnerable, their chances of being heavily penalized should be carefully considered.

Second Object: Game Premiums at One's Own Bid.

Failing in the first object, partners should try to select from their combined hands the bid *most likely* to score game. The fact that an honour combination (such as 100 honours), or that a certain bid (such as no-trump), may be worth a

few more points, is irrelevant when compared to the fundamental requirement: the bid (be it only in a minor suit) that offers the best chances of success compatible with safety is the one that must be arrived at.

No Slam considerations should be allowed to interfere with and confuse the natural process of bidding until the best game bid is definitely in sight.

Third Object: Defensive Bidding.

When neither a penalty nor a game at one's own bid seems likely, there still remains a powerful objective: to push the opponents to an unfulfillable contract, or to force them to accept a penalty roughly equal to, or less than, the trick-score they could have made.

Nothing, not even Defensive Play, is more difficult and at the same time more important than Defensive Bidding. Skill in Defensive Bidding is the true measure of the great player. The new international scoring makes it even more imperative to develop Defensive Bidding, and for this reason the Culbertson System of 1933 contains many new Defensive bids (see particularly Jump Overcalls). The defence against the enemy is fought on three lines of trenches: (1) to block the part-score; (2) to stop the simple game; and (3) to save the rubber game. The main line of defence is held by the non-vulnerable side. Here the battle should be fought at its hardest, for, once the player is vulnerable, his margin of safe overbidding is sharply reduced. It goes without saying that the scientific overbidding outlined in this chapter, however sound mathematically, must be modified somewhat from the psychological standpoint. Thus, if playing with a very erratic partner, unnecessarily to prolong a rubber is to increase the chances of possible disaster. Also, with a weak partner, a Penalty Double should be made decidedly in preference to a first game and thus cushion the possible loss of a rubber.

CHAPTER II

BIDDING AND PLAYING VALUATION

BIDDING VALUATION is the count of expected winners and losers at a specified bid. The expected winners are called *playing-tricks*¹ or *winners* and consist of tricks won with honours and with low cards in long or short suits. Both the bidding and play deal with tricks. The essential difference between a bid and a play is that the former deals with tricks in the *abstract*, and the latter deals with tricks as actually developed. Bidding is *mental play* which is repeated on a concrete basis after the Dummy goes down. It follows that in order to make any bid successfully a player must be able to visualize it in terms of playing-tricks. Each bid must be played in his mind as though the Dummy were down.

The expert's mental process, in valuation and in bidding, is based on elimination and on certain logical assumptions as to the cards that his partner holds. This will enable him to count his winners and his losers, and thus anticipate the actual play.

THE PROCESS OF 'MENTAL PLAY'

Assume, for example, that I hold:

♠ A K 8 6 5 3 ♥ 3 ♦ A Q ♣ K J 10 9

My process of bidding valuation will be somewhat as follows:

To begin with, I count the cards I must lose in my hand,

¹ By *playing-trick* or *winner* is meant any trick value, be it in honours or in low cards. Some *playing-tricks* are reasonably certain, while others are probable. Many writers use the term 'probable' trick for low-card values. There is nothing probable about a void or a singleton in a Dummy with four trumps—they are certain values. 'Probable trick' or 'probable winner' should be reserved for an uncertain value like K x or, in the Responding Hand, a doubleton of a side suit with but three trumps. Top-honour combinations and trump tricks, which are certain to be made regardless of distribution, are called *sure playing-tricks* or *winners*.

and I therefore mentally 'lose' at least 1 spade trick, 1 heart trick and the Queen of diamonds if the finesse fails. In exchange for the 'lost' Queen of diamonds I am entitled to capture the Queen of clubs, giving me therefore 3 good club tricks, which, together with 5 spade tricks and the Ace of diamonds should produce about 9 tricks in all.

My next step is to determine what help I can logically expect from partner. As I have not heard him bid I have the right to assume that he holds only about one-third of the outstanding strength, which is the average. Since 9 out of 13 tricks at the spade bid are already accounted for, 4 tricks remain unaccounted for in the three hands other than my own, and it can be temporarily assumed that partner probably has 1 and may have 2 of these—since on the average he will hold one-third of the outstanding 4 tricks. This assumption will be modified as may be required during the subsequent bidding. As the bidding unfolds, and more precise information as to the position of key honour cards and distribution (length) of suits is gathered from partner and opponents, the original assumptions (based on mathematical averages which are far from being reliable) are gradually replaced by more precise data (based mainly on correct methods of partnership bidding). The so-called mathematical averages are but crude tools to be used temporarily when no other information is available.

Such is the key process underlying bidding valuation, which, as already stated, is largely abstract play and which is fully explained in the chapter on Plastic Valuation.

TRICKS

The trick¹ is the common unit of measure, the stuff from

¹ Cards, like their blood cousins, Chess and Draughts, originated from the very ancient games which imitated the tactics of warfare. This explains the strikingly militaristic structure of suits in cards. Each of the four suits is 'an army', and the tactics of all games of skill in which tricks are won or lost are based on leadership (honour) and mass (distribution or length) factors. The winning of a trick is symbolic of capturing the enemy. The essence of all card games of skill is the struggle of suits in which the opposing

which all bids (and plays) are built. There are three distinct kinds of tricks—*honour-tricks*, *low-card tricks in four-card or longer suits* and *ruffing-tricks in short suits*. Low-card and ruffing-tricks are of value at some bids and not at others. The 'ruffing' or short-suit kind of trick, for instance, is of value only in the Dummy and in defensive play (against the Declarer). A hand containing ruffing-tricks, if played at no-trump, when ruffing-tricks are non-existent, would have a totally different value.

Again, a low card established in a long side suit may be as good as an Ace at no-trump but is worthless if the same hand is played at the opponents' trump bid. Only *Defensive* honours, such as Aces and honour combinations like K Q, A Q or even A J 10, which stand a reasonable chance of not being trumped, are sufficiently stable to be used as a general yardstick for all hands and for all bids.

HONOUR-TRICKS

At each deal about 8 out of the 13 tricks are won with honours. The remaining 5 tricks develop from established low cards in long suits and from ruffs in absent suits. Most bidding methods centre around the key problem of locating and valuing the ever-shifting balance of honour strength in the hands held by oneself and partner, and in those held by the adversaries.¹ Scientific bidding is impossible without a clear understanding of the following three essential factors sides lead out their low-card (mass) and high-card (quality) forces in an attempt to break through the obstacles of opposing cards in time to prevent the other side from doing likewise. Dominating every play and the struggle of suits is the shadow of the unseen Time Factor. (See *The Red Book of Leads and Plays*, by Ely Culbertson).

¹ Other bidding methods deal with inferences on distribution and distributional (or low-card) values. Here the objects are (1) to locate and to determine by means of trump Raises and Denials (Take-out bids) the favourable distribution or lengths of suits in the partnership hands and thus select the best and longest trump bid, and (2) to determine if the partnership hands contain sufficient ruffing or short-suit values to warrant a safe choice between some trump bid and no-trump.

in honour valuation:

1. The 'defence' value of honours.
2. The 'finesse' value of honours.
3. The Standard Table of Honour Values.

THE DEFENCE VALUE OF HONOURS

In all trump bids the same hand possesses two standards of values:

The value in *attack*—when played at one's own or partner's trump bids.

The value in *defence*—when played against opponents' trump bid.

In attack a hand such as

♠ A K Q 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ 10 9 7 ♦ 7 ♣ 3

is worth 8 tricks and easily justifies a shut-out Opening bid of four spades.

In defence—say, against an adverse diamond bid—the same hand is worth but 1 trick, the ♠ A, for the ♠ K will then quite probably be ruffed.

Obviously this double standard of values arises from the fact that, while low cards cannot pass through the opponents' trump barrier without being trumped, honours, especially the top ones in suits of normal length, generally survive the first and second leads.

This defensive characteristic of honours is of vital importance to partnership bidding because, by counting carefully the defensive honour values in the combined hands, it becomes possible to determine accurately the minimum number of tricks that opponents must lose at any bid. At any bid 8 out of 13 tricks are more or less *constant*—that is, they are won with honours. If partners signal through their bids that they hold 5 honour- (defensive) tricks in their combined hands, and the opponents contract to take 11 tricks at their bid, it is clear that the trick-taking limit of the opponents' hands is 8 tricks and that, therefore, they have either overbid by 3 tricks or the distribution of their hands is quite extraordinary. This fact explains why it is almost a religion with good players not to make any important bid, especially an

Opening bid, without a definite minimum. These honour-trick *minimums* vary according to the *bidding situation*. Thus an Opening two-bid in a suit will probably show a minimum of $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, but an Opening four-bid in the same suit will barely guarantee 1 honour-trick in defence.

Not all honour-tricks are defensive. The third lead of any suit is quite likely to be trumped, so that a sequence like A K Q J x x, *defensively speaking*, is worth hardly more than A K x x x x. Even second leads in a suit will often fail to pass through a trump barrier. This imposes a double standard of values even with honours, resulting in the following rule for defensive valuation in bidding:

Not more than 2 honour-tricks can be counted defensively in any one suit in strength-showing bids.

Certain three-card combinations such as A J 10 or K Q 10 are given a defensive value of $1\frac{1}{2}$ tricks in spite of the possibility of a third round ruff. The ruffing danger is counter-balanced by the fact that such combinations are often worth considerably more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and that even defensively their value is greatly enhanced when partner holds the missing honour. *Note:* Unless otherwise specified the word 'honour-trick' is used throughout this book to mean a *defensive* honour-trick, exclusively.

THE 'FINESSE' VALUE OF HONOURS

Excepting Aces and long sequences, the bidding value of lower honours is based upon their finesse value in actual play. The precise trick value of single honours such as K x and of combined honours such as A Q or K J 10 depends on the *position* of the missing higher honour (or honours) of the same suit. As it is prudent to assume that the missing higher honour is held by one of the opponents, and not by partner, the chances for or against a successful finesse¹ are then exactly even. In bidding valuation we have accordingly *half* or *probable* trick values as distinguished from the full trick estimate for Aces and King-Queens. Two such *half trick* values are about equivalent to an Ace. For instance,

¹ A finesse is a method of play which will gain an extra trick (or tricks) if the *position* of the higher missing card (or cards) of the

A Q is worth $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and K x is worth $\frac{1}{2}$, giving in all 2 tricks, which is for all practical purposes equivalent to A K or two Aces.

The lower honour values, such as an isolated Queen or a Knave, are too indefinite and variable to justify mathematically any fractional or point count. Separately taken, they are minor factors, but their accumulated weight is of great importance and accounts for the difference between a hand with 'body' to it and one that looks empty even with three Aces. Even Tens and nines are of importance as intermediates. Two plus values (see next page) are about equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$ trick. For instance, K x equals roughly a Queen and a Knave in different suits.

In conclusion, the *position* of missing higher honours and *distribution* (length) of suits determine the precise defensive value of honour combinations.

CULBERTSON STANDARD TABLE OF HONOUR-TRICKS
(Minimum Holdings Valued on the Defensive Basis)

$\frac{1}{2}$ TRICK	1 TRICK
Any K x or Q J x ²	Any Ace, K J x or K Q
Any Q x and J x of different suits	Any K x and Q x of different suits
$1\frac{1}{2}$ TRICKS	2 TRICKS
Any A Q, A J 10 or K Q J, (K Q 10 ¹)	Any A K

same suit is favourable. There are two kinds of finesses:

1. An attempt is made to force a cover of a card led by the player, for instance: (1)
2. An attempt is made to prevent a cover, for instance: (2)

North	North
A 10 9 x	A 5 4 3
(1)	(2)
South	South
Q J 8 5	Q 9 8 7
(1)	(2)

¹ For the purpose of counting the minimum requirements for Opening bids of one, as well as for all Forcing bids (when a losing Slam bid may be contracted for if care is not used), the K Q 10 combination should be valued defensively on the same basis as K Q x—that is, practically as 1 honour-trick. After careful experiments the author and his associates decided that the present higher scoring for Slams necessitates this tightening up of the Standard Table of Honour-Tricks.

² x represents a small card and is sometimes called a 'guard' to

'Plus' Values

A blank King, a Q x or a J x when not already supplemented by a similar value in the hand. Two such 'plus' values are worth $\frac{1}{2}$ trick. In A J 2 the Knave is a 'plus' value, but it may not be counted as a 'plus' value in A K J.

The French, who love to inject an element of romance into everything they undertake, call the combination K Q *le grand mariage* and the combination Q J *le petit mariage*. *Le grand mariage*, in Bridge, is worth one trick, while *le petit mariage* is worth but half a trick . . . and it does not matter whether they be united or not.

The honour values in the Standard Table are based on two prudent assumptions:

(a) That the missing higher honours are held by the opponents and their exact position is unknown; and

(b) That the distribution (length) of suits is not such that honours are likely to be ruffed (and made worthless defensively) on the second lead.

As the bidding unfolds, these original assumptions are replaced or modified in the light of more precise information obtained.

REVALUATION

Additional information disclosed during the bidding as to the more exact *location* of missing higher honours, or *distribution* (length) of the suit, modifies the estimate of honours in the Table. For instance:

♠ K x is worth $\frac{1}{2}$ trick if the position of the ♠ A is unknown.

♠ K x is worth 1 trick if partner bids one spade.

♠ K x is worth *more* than $\frac{1}{2}$ trick if Right Hand bids one spade.

♠ K x is worth *less* than $\frac{1}{2}$ trick if Left Hand bids one spade.

The process of 'marking' during the bidding the individual cards in the different hands is called *Card Placing*. The pro-

the honour. At least one small card must accompany a King, a Queen or a Knave.

cess of 'marking' during the bidding the suit lengths around the table is called *Suit Placing*. Holding $\spadesuit A K J x x$ it is fairly safe to expect 2 defensive tricks from the $\spadesuit A K$, especially when partner denies the spade bid; but when partner vigorously supports the spade suit, the chances are that against the opponents' trump bid the second lead of spades will be ruffed—defensively the $A K$ is now worth but 1 trick, and with freak hands may easily be worthless. For this reason good players avoid doubling for penalties when below a game contract on mere honour strength and without trump tricks.

THE VALUE OF THE AVERAGE HAND IN TRICKS

An Ace, a King, a Queen and a Knave, or one-fourth of all the higher honours, is the average expectation of each player before the hands are seen. Such an average hand, with only one honour in each suit, is worth 1 trick for the Ace, and 1 trick for the King and Queen in different suits, with the Knave as a 'plus' value, making in all 2 *honour-tricks plus a Knave*—which is the working equivalent of the average hand in terms of honour-tricks. This basic assumption furnishes the player with a simple yardstick for measuring the relative honour strength of any hand, and thus assists materially in estimating the game or penalty expectancy of any bid.

WHY $2\frac{1}{2}$ HONOUR-TRICKS FOR OPENING ONE-BIDS?

The average share of honours for each player is 2 honour-tricks plus a Knave. If we add another Queen to the Knave we have an equivalent of $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick for a Queen and Knave of different suits. Hence $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks—meaning any hand which in honours is a Queen higher than the average (and which partner therefore has not assumed)—is the scientifically determined minimum for all Opening one-bids. Experience has shown that if a hand contains at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, the chances are good that the combined partnership hands will make 7 playing-tricks (one 'odd'). This is why, in the Culbertson System, all Opening one-bids require at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

THE RULE OF EIGHT

The total of defensive honour-tricks in the pack will on the average produce at any bid about 8 out of the 13 tricks. Aces will win 4 tricks and the lower honours will win 4 more tricks *as valued in the Standard Table on the defensive basis*. This Rule of Eight will not work with any other count of honours because it is based on the fact that the average hand, which contains one-fourth of the total share of honours, and which includes even Queens and Knives, is worth 2 honour-tricks plus. In many hands honours will take 9 tricks so that, strictly speaking, the count of defensive honour-tricks for the four hands is not 8 but between 8 and $8\frac{1}{2}$. Furthermore, in applying the Rule of Eight to trump bids one must remember that any honour is apt to be ruffed and that, therefore, while the maximum count of $8\frac{1}{2}$ is constant the minimum may fall below 8 tricks.

The fact that the total *bidding value* of all defensive honours around the table, at any bid and regardless of how they combine, is between 8 and $8\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, is of decisive importance in applying the process of elimination during the bidding. Through the simple use of the elimination process a player is aware, at most stages of the bidding, of the minimum honour strength (and consequent game or penalty expectancies) held in partnership and opponents' hands.

DETERMINING THE 'BALANCE OF STRENGTH'

The 'balance of strength' is determined simply by adding the minimum of honour-tricks *shown* by partner's various bids to the honour-tricks held in one's own hand. *the balance remaining after subtracting from 8 or $8\frac{1}{2}$ gives the number of honour-tricks held by the opponents.*

If partner has made a bid, his minimum shown depends on the kind of bid made—Opening one-bid, Secondary bid, Forcing bid, etc.; if partner passes, or has not yet bid, his share is roughly one-third of the remaining defensive tricks (honour-tricks) and proportionately less when one or both opponents show strength.

The total of honour-tricks shown by the opponents' bids

added to those in the player's own hand gives a fair measure of the balance of honour strength held by partner—an important consideration, especially when partner consistently passes.

The 'balance of strength' principle is of immediate practical value at all stages of the bidding. For instance, assume that First Hand opens with one no-trump, showing thereby at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks; Second Hand doubles, showing about 3 honour-tricks; Third Hand holds

♠ A Q 3 ♥ J 7 5 4 ♦ A 9 3 ♣ 8 5 2

worth about $2\frac{1}{2}+$ honour-tricks. With 8 honour-tricks already accounted for, Fourth Hand can have but a King or a Queen-Knave at the most, and more likely holds a blank. The proper bid by Third Hand is 'Redouble', to flash to his partner that he holds the balance of honour strength and that therefore a heavy penalty is in sight. (See also Defence Against Psychics, in Book IV.)

Exactly the same process of honour-strength elimination is used, although in reverse order, in Slam bidding. Assume that First Hand opens with two spades, which shows at least 5 honour-tricks, and Third Hand holds

♠ J 7 4 2 ♥ A Q 6 ♦ A 8 5 3 ♣ 9 2

worth $2\frac{1}{2}+$ honour-tricks. The combined hands show at least $7\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. This means that a Small Slam will, as a rule, be made, for the balance of strength left to the opponents is but 1 trick. Incidentally, it also means—and this without artificial Ace showing—that the partnerships' combined hands contain at least three Aces.

THE 8 : 5 YARDSTICK

The winning of tricks with low cards largely depends upon honours, which serve as indispensable stoppers and re-entries. It becomes, therefore, possible to use the Rule of Eight not only to measure the balance of honour strength around the table but to extend it for measuring with fair accuracy the chances for scoring one-odd, two-odd, game or Slam, especially at no-trump. If players North and South hold about 4 honour-tricks, the opponents will hold about

4 honour-tricks also, and game therefore is practically excluded for either side except with freakish hands. Either side will, as a rule, score one-odd or be defeated by 1 trick at no-trump, or at a suit bid score from one- to two-odd.

TABLE OF EXPECTANCIES

<i>If combined honour-tricks are—</i>	<i>The contract expectancy is—</i>
4 to 4½	one-odd zone
About 5	two-odd zone
About 6	game zone
7 to 7½ (according to distribution)	Small Slam zone
About 8	Grand Slam zone

Note 1. With trump bids 4½ honour-tricks will usually produce two-odd, and 5 honour-tricks will produce three-odd.

Note 2. At both trump and no-trump bids, 5½ honour-tricks will normally *produce game* if a suit or suits are strong and long or if the combined hands 'fit'. Nevertheless, in order to avoid unnecessary penalties, a player must avoid contracting immediately for a game on the 5½ honour-trick expectancy of game. A hasty game bid shuts out much of the valuable information available at a lower stage of bidding.

The count of 4 honour-tricks in two hands is on the line that separates a bid from a pass. It explains why about 1½ honour-tricks are sufficient to take out partner's Opening one-bid in a suit (which shows 2½ honour-tricks) with one no-trump. Such a 'negative' one no-trump still leaves the contract at one-odd and has the great advantage of keeping the bidding open in case the Opening Hand holds more than a minimum Opening bid.

The count of 5½ plus to 6 honour-tricks in the combined hands usually results in game at *some* bid. This explains why about 3½ honour-tricks (the precise number depending on the strength of the trump suit) are generally required to make a Forcing Take-out of partner's Opening one-bid, which already shows at least 2½ honour-tricks.

The Standard Table and the Rule of Eight represent the train of subconscious reasoning of all master players. For

this reason they are not only applicable to any system but, when tested in practice, work out with remarkable accuracy. Every player should deal out several hands and see for himself that this is true.

This does not mean that in certain instances the honour values given in the Table will not show a slight over or under valuation, or that extremely rare hands cannot be set up artificially to show a trick more or less than the constant 8-8½. Neither does it mean that a master player does not supplement *his* Rule of Eight with finer shadings of values. Distribution will always remain a paramount factor. The fact remains that any practical test will prove decisively that the Standard Table is not only superior to any method of 'quick-trick' valuation so far devised, but that it is the indispensable measuring rod of all honour values in bidding for masters and beginners alike.

The Standard Table of Honour-Tricks is an invaluable compass that will enable even the tyro to navigate with reasonable safety the treacherous seas of Distribution.

Eschewing vague generalities and arbitrary and rigid counts, the table has purposely been made flexible, to allow for the individual judgment which is indispensable in a game like Contract, abounding as it does in subtle inferences.

Contract is not a game of 'clever guessing' but of scientific precision based on logical inferences; however, to escape the pitfalls of routine theorists, its principles must be used *grosso modo* and not too absolutely.

CHAPTER III

NO-TRUMP VALUATION

IN NO-TRUMP bids the winning of tricks with low cards depends on the number of honour-tricks held, which are indispensable for re-entries and stoppers (the Time Factor). Therefore the count of honour-tricks alone will *automatically include* in the hand a proportionate number of low-card tricks. As stated in the Rule of Eight, the ratio of honour-tricks to low-card tricks is roughly 8:5. From this basic idea any player can logically work up a remarkably accurate table of no-trump bids, Raises and Take-outs.

THE 4-5-6 COUNT

1. *Two combined hands containing 4-4½ honour-tricks will on the average develop 2-3 low-card tricks in addition.* Partners either make one no-trump or are set 1 trick.
2. *Two combined hands containing slightly better than 5 honour-tricks will on the average develop from 2½ to 3 low-card tricks in addition.* Partners are in the two no-trump zone.
3. *Two combined hands containing about 6 honour-tricks will on the average develop at least 3 low-card tricks in addition.* Partners are in the three no-trump zone.

This simple rule of the 4-5-6 Count serves as a basis for no-trump Take-outs and Raises.¹

NO-TRUMP TAKE-OUTS

An Opening suit bid of one shows a minimum of 2½ honour-tricks and a maximum of 5½ honour-tricks. Partner's no-trump Take-outs will depend on *his* balance of honour-tricks and distribution. His possible courses of

¹ As explained in the *Contract Bridge Blue Book* of 1930, two and three no-trump will frequently be made with 5 and 5½ honour-tricks respectively, provided the distribution is favourable. The above slightly heightened requirements are appropriate to all distributions in more than 97 per cent of hands. It goes without saying that a hand can always be manufactured so that even 8 honour-tricks will fail to produce a single extra trick.

action are as follows, provided no suit Raise or suit Take-out is available:

1. Holding less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in two suits, he *passes*. With a reliable partner he may bid one no-trump on as little as an Ace and a Queen or two Kings and a Knave or two Kings and two Tens.

2. Holding about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 plus honour-tricks in two suits, he *bids one no-trump*—a minimum or negative response. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ can be shaded down to an Ace and a Queen.

3. Holding about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 plus honour-tricks in two suits, he *bids two no-trump*. When vulnerable it is best to respond with *one no-trump* if holding a *bare* $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and the sterile distribution 4-3-3-3.

Two no-trump is a semi-Forcing bid: that is, the Opening Hand must bid again except when holding a bare $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and a 4-3-3-3 distribution. Some writers advocate that a two no-trump response be unconditionally Forcing, an obviously fallacious contention. As a result the Opening Hand would have to give up a great number of minimum Opening bids which frequently are an annoying defence to the enemy. Furthermore, in the Culbertson System the two no-trump semi-Forcing response conveys a *precise* inference on a tremendous number of hands which contain from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 plus honour-tricks. These inferences become vague and blurred once the response is absolutely Forcing.¹

4. Holding about $3\frac{1}{2}$ but less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in two suits, he *bids three no-trump*.

¹ *The Culbertson System is designed essentially for experts* and consequently no compromise is permitted for the sake of an inferior player. The absolutely Forcing two no-trump as well as the Forcing One Over One responses are being justified by certain writers on the ground that the average player has not sense enough to use his free judgment and therefore should be forced right and left. This may be true, but the writer has always fought against the principle of *two* systems, one for the beginner and one for the expert. Simplicity and precision of inferences are the criteria of a great system for any expert, and the interests of the beginner can best be served by respecting his native intelligence and thus avoiding a special diet of dog biscuits.

5. Holding about $4\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, if distribution is favourable, he *bids four no-trump*—a Slam try. With hands of such strength, however, a better bid is usually available as a preliminary or hors d'œuvre—namely, a Forcing Take-out.

By reversing the process the Opening bidder can determine from the size of partner's no-trump responses the number of honour-tricks held by him. In this manner partners check each other on the balance of honour-tricks held by each.

Assume South opens with one spade and partner responds with three no-trump. The inference is that the Responding Hand has, as a rule, at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, no other bid-dable suit, and *possibly* inadequate support for spades. When the Responding Hand responds with one no-trump instead of with three no-trump the inference is that 2 honour-tricks and a Queen at the most are held. It goes without saying that in the matter of no-trump Take-outs and Raises the player should use at least a little imagination and shade the 4-5-6 Count to suit the bidding situation, partner's psychology and distribution—the last being of particular importance. With suits of fair quality and length, or with good chances of developing partner's bid suit, slight liberties can be taken. There are however, certain types of hands that contain no 'body', such as a 4-3-3-3 distribution with a flock of sixes and sevens, when a Raise or a Take-out to three no-trump on even $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks would be unwise.

NO-TRUMP RAISES (NOT VULNERABLE)

An Opening no-trump bid (not vulnerable) shows at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and usually denies a biddable suit. Therefore partner should, lacking a suit Take-out, proceed as follows:

1. *Pass* if holding barely 2 honour-tricks, or less.
2. *Raise from one to two no-trump* if holding about $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks—depending on intermediates.¹

¹ *Intermediates* are nines, Tens and single 'plus' values such as Knaves and even Queens (guarded or unguarded). These intermediates add considerably to the 'body' of the hand and are of importance in all bids but particularly in bidding no-trump.

3. *Raise from one to three no-trump* if holding $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. With very favourable distribution the three no-trump Raise can be shaded to 3 plus honour-tricks.

VULNERABLE NO-TRUMP RAISES

The requirements for no-trump Raises are modified when partner, vulnerable, has opened the bidding with one no-trump, which shows between 4 and 5 *bare* honour-tricks in his hand. We have already seen, from the 4-5-6 Count, the expectancy of tricks which may be developed in play. Therefore, if the Opening Hand, vulnerable, bids one no-trump, the Responding Hand should:

1. *Raise to two no-trump*, if holding $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 honour-tricks.
2. *Raise to three no-trump*, if holding 2+ to 3 honour-tricks, depending on intermediates. It is, of course, assumed that the Responding Hand has not a biddable suit which would justify a Take-out (see Suit Take-outs below).
3. When the Responding Hand has 3+ or more honour-tricks, the partnership is definitely in the Slam Zone, since a vulnerable one no-trump shows 4 honour-tricks. With 3+ or more honour-tricks a Forcing Take-out should be preferred to any other response (see Chapter XI).

SUIT TAKE-OUTS OF ONE NO-TRUMP (NOT VUL).

An Opening bid of one no-trump not vulnerable is the weakest bid in Contract. Consequently partner's suit response should always show a certain minimum amount of strength and should never be a 'rescue'.

Holding a five-card biddable suit with at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the hand, make a Regulation Take-out of two in the suit.

Holding a good four-card biddable suit with about 2 honour-tricks in the hand, make a Regulation Take-out of two in the suit when the hand contains a singleton. Otherwise pass, or bid two no-trump.

Holding 3 honour-tricks and good distribution, make a Forcing Take-out on a five-card major suit. When the suit

is a minor, prefer the immediate no-trump Raise, unless the suit is of six-card length or the hand contains a singleton.¹

Holding less than 3 honour-tricks but freakish distribution (6-4-2-1 with a fair trump suit), bid game immediately in a major and bid four- or five-odd in a minor, according to the make-up of the hand. (See also Sign-off Bids.)

SUIT TAKE-OUTS OF VULNERABLE ONE NO-TRUMP

A Regulation suit Take-out of a vulnerable Opening one no-trump bid (which has shown about 4 honour-tricks) may be made if the Responding Hand holds a five-card biddable suit with about 1 honour-trick in the hand. A Forcing Take-out (a Jump bid of one more than necessary in a new suit) may be made with a good biddable suit if there are about 2½ honour-tricks in the hand, since the vulnerable Opening no-trump bid has shown at least 4 honour-tricks.² (See Forcing Take-outs.)

¹ The requirements for making a Forcing Take-out over one no-trump can be lowered slightly, because the Responding Hand knows that partner holds at least secondary support for his suit.

² This is the only situation in which a player is justified in forcing on 2½ honour-tricks. The higher requirements for Forcing Take-outs are due to new scoring laws and to the new (part-Forcing) One Over One.

CHAPTER IV

THE DISTRIBUTIONAL COUNT¹

COUNT OF THE HAND AT TRUMP BIDS

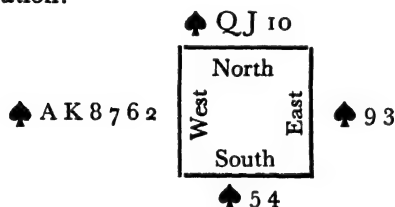
AT NO-TRUMP bids there is available the quick count of honour-tricks based on the Rule of Eight.

At suit bids trumps dominate even honours and, under the powerful protection of the trump barrier which spreads from Declarer's into Dummy's hand, low cards in long and short side suits acquire a definitely measurable trick value. In order to obtain the accurate total at a given bid it is necessary to count separately each of the *three kinds* of tricks. To put it another way it is necessary to count separately *each suit* to obtain the total of the hand.

HOW TO COUNT ANY LONG SUIT

The trick expectancy of any four-card or longer suit is made up of (a) honour-tricks and (b) establishable low-card tricks.

Illustration:



2 tricks will be won with honours (A K), and 1 trick is lost to the ♠ Q, after which the way is cleared for 3 estab-

¹ There is nothing in Contract more important and more difficult to learn than precise valuation of suit bids—a matter of years if hit-and-miss methods are adopted.

The Distributional Count is so called because not only are the low cards counted independently of, and in addition to, honour-tricks, but their valuation varies according to distribution.

lished low-card tricks, making the total value of West's suit 5 tricks in all.

The number of establishable low cards (winners) in a long suit depends on the distribution of the remaining cards of that suit in the other three hands.

In the foregoing example, if, instead of three spades, North holds ♠ Q J 10 8, West's long suit makes but 4 tricks. In Book III the reader will find a table of probable distributions. He will see that it is most unwise to bank on the so-called 'average distributions'. The most probable distribution of 5-3-3-2 is but slightly more probable than a 5-4-3-1 distribution, which is next in probability; and yet the practical effect on the number of establishable low cards is quite different. The holding ♠ A K 5 4 3 can establish 2 low-card tricks with the so-called average 3-3-2 distribution of the remaining spades—assuming opponents hold the Q J 10. With Q J doubly guarded owing to a 4-3-1 distribution, the same five-card suit can now establish but one low card, which makes a difference of one hundred per cent!

When a suit is bid as trump, partner is in a position to show favourable or unfavourable distribution by assisting or denying the bid suit. In bids of one and before hearing from partner, the Opening bidder may temporarily assume the most probable distribution—the average. With side suits, however, the player should, as a matter of precaution, assume not the *most* probable, but the *next* most probable distribution. This explains why, in the following count of long-suit tricks, the low cards in the trump suit are given double the value of the low cards in side suits until partner denies adequate trump support.

In addition to the trump suit and honours the player should take into account the value of low cards in long side suits. Lengths in side suits combined with Dummy's will, as

Players will find that in learning this Count they are actually mastering the principles of play. It is the first and indispensable step toward expert valuation and bidding. The greater part of the credit for the Distributional Count rightfully belongs to Josephine Culbertson, the author's wife.

a rule, develop, under trump protection, one or more low-card tricks. These apparently insignificant values are frequently the vital tricks indispensable to reach a game (or a Slam) contract, and any method of valuation that takes no precise account of low cards in side suits is basically wrong.

THE OPENING HAND

*(Bidding Valuation at Opening Bidder's Own Trump Bid if Supported;
Count Only Honour-Tricks for Opening One-Bids)*

LONG-SUIT TRICKS

	<i>In Trump Suit</i>	<i>In a Side Suit</i>
A four-card length is worth	1 trick	$\frac{1}{2}$ trick
A five-card length is worth	2 tricks	1 trick
A six-card length is worth	3 tricks	2 tricks

Long-suit tricks cannot be counted in a suit bid by the opponents. A worthless four-card length should not be counted unless the suit has been previously shown by partner.

The full trick value of any suit is determined by counting length values separately and *adding* the honour values—that is, long suit tricks and honour-tricks combined.

Illustration:

1. If A Q 5 4 3 is bid as trump it is worth $3\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks—meaning between 3 and 4 tricks— $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks for the A Q and 2 long-suit tricks for the fourth and fifth cards of the five-card suit; but if partner denies trump support it is worth but $2\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks.

2. A 9 8 2, a side suit, is worth $1\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks—1 honour-trick for the Ace and $\frac{1}{2}$ trick for the fourth card of the four-card suit.

3. K 9 8 7 2 is worth $2\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks if the suit is trump, but but $1\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks if it is a side suit.

The illustrations above clearly show the values of length in suits. Naturally, if a suit has been tentatively named as trump, which partner fails to support, the holder, in determining whether or not to make another bid, cannot count his length in the suit at the value of a trump suit, because,

owing to partner's failure to support his bid, he must assume that the distribution is unfavourable. Whether or not the suit can be rebid is to be determined by its additional strength and length. Whenever partner fails to support the bid suit it is wise to assume at most a two-card length in the suit or even a singleton, and rebid accordingly.

With solid suits such as K Q J 10 9 or Q J 10 9 7 6 it is not necessary to count the length and honour values separately. The quickest method is to count out the missing honours as losers. Thus K Q J 10 9 is worth 4 sure playing-tricks—one loser being deducted for the missing Ace. (See Plastic Valuation.)

Honour combinations such as A K Q, A K J, A Q J, K Q J, K J 10 and Q J 10 can be given their full value (respectively 3, $2\frac{1}{2}$, $2\frac{1}{2}$, 2, $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 playing-tricks) only when counting the hand for a Raise or Rebid; and not for Opening bids, Doubles or Take-outs of partner's bids, all of which require defensive honour strength.

In addition, information disclosed during the bidding as to the position of missing higher honours or distribution (length) of suits modifies the defensive value of honour-tricks.

VALUING OPENING HAND AT HIS OWN TRUMP BID

The expected winners of long suits and honours give the total trick value of any hand when played at the holder's own trump bid.

A few minutes practice will enable a player to value any hand almost instantaneously.

Illustrations:

1. ♠ A Q 5 4 3	(trump suit 3½)	2. ♠ K 8 7 5 4 3	(trump suit 3½)
♥ A 2	(1)	♥ A Q	(1½)
♦ A 9 8 2	(1½)	♦ 3	(0)
♣ 9 3	(0)	♣ Q J 5 2	(1)
Total 6		Total 6	

3. ♠ A K Q J 3 2	(trump suit 6)	4. ♠ 2	(0)
♥ J 9 8 2	(½)	♥ A K Q J	(trump suit 4)
♦ K 4	(½)	♦ A 4 3 2	(1½)
♣ 2	(0)	♣ A 9 5 4	(1½)
Total 7		Total 7	

Singletons or voids, though distinctly an asset to the hand as a whole, cannot be counted as extra tricks for the reason that the length value of the trump suit has already been counted. Ruffing-tricks, therefore, are not a *net* gain to the Opening Hand except when the long trump suit is very weak.

THE RESPONDING HAND

(BIDDING VALUATION IN SUPPORT OF PARTNER'S TRUMP BIDS)

The total count of playing-tricks in the Responding Hand includes the following:

1. Trump length and honours (in partner's bid suit).
2. Low-card and honour-tricks in side suits.
3. *Ruffing-tricks due to short suits* (voids, singletons and doubletons).

Dummy's trumps have a trick value independent of that of the main trump suit. The reason is that the increased length in the Dummy promotes the favourable distribution of the Declarer's main trump suit and thus increases the chances of dropping the outstanding missing honours. For instance, with ♠ A K 7 6 2 the Declarer counts one loser, assuming there are three low trumps in the Dummy. Now, if the Dummy has four low trumps, Declarer's chances of dropping the outstanding Queen and Knave on the Ace and King leads are proportionately increased. This explains why four low trumps in the Dummy are given a value in addition to the value of a short suit such as a singleton.

The distinctive characteristic of the Responding Hand (the Dummy) lies in the use of *ruffing-tricks*, which, although not counted as extra tricks in the Opening Hand, acquire an extraordinary value in the Dummy and sometimes in the opponents' hands.

This appearance of a new kind of trick—non-existent at no-trump¹—is due to the fact that otherwise ‘worthless’ trumps in the Dummy can be utilized to ruff the losers from Declarer’s hand.

The hand

♠ 3 ♥ J 7 5 4 3 2 ♦ J 7 6 5 4 ♣ 10

is practically worthless in support of partner’s spade bid; in support of partner’s heart or diamond bid it is almost a powerful hand. The remarkable feature of singletons, doubletons or absent suits is that their trick value largely depends upon the trump length in the Dummy.

Assume that the Opening Hand bids one spade and the Dummy has ♠ J 9 8 and a singleton small heart. Even if Declarer holds three losers in hearts it is not probable that more than one heart will be ruffed in actual play since the opponents obviously will lead trumps to prevent the second ruff. Now, if the Dummy holds four spades to a Knave and the same singleton heart, the Declarer can ruff at least two losing hearts no matter what the opponents’ defence may be, since their trumps will be soon exhausted. This makes a difference, on the average, of one hundred per cent.

When supporting partner’s trump bids:

THE TRUMP LENGTH AND HONOURS ARE VALUED:

<i>Trumps</i>	<i>Tricks</i>
Three cards or less	0
Four cards	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 ²
Five cards	1
Six cards	2
Add for Ace	1

¹ In all bidding games of the partnership family, such as Bridge and Russian Vint, fewer tricks are required for a game bonus at no-trump than at trump bids. This is obviously not due to the fact that no-trump plays are uncertain and offer fewer stoppers. The no-trump scoring is an attempt to counterbalance the ruffing-tricks which are the by-product of trump plays only. Thus, it may be ‘cheaper’ to play for five-odd at diamonds, when extra ruffing-tricks are available, than for three-odd at no-trump.

² Count four cards as worth 1 trick for length when headed by a Knave or a Ten-nine, but only $\frac{1}{2}$ trick for length if headed by better than a Knave.

Add for King

1

Add for Queen

 $\frac{1}{2}$ (sometimes) 1¹

Not more than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tricks should be counted for honours in Dummy's trump suit.

THE LOW-CARD AND HONOUR-TRICKS IN SIDE SUITS ARE VALUED:

Same as in Opening Hand— $\frac{1}{2}$ trick for each card in excess of three, plus the total of honour-tricks. Long-suit tricks cannot be counted in a suit bid by the opponents.

THE RUFFING-TRICKS ARE VALUED:

	With 3 of Partner's Suit	With 4 or More ²
A doubleton (only two cards of a suit)	$\frac{1}{2}$ trick	1 trick
A singleton (only one card of a suit)	1 trick	2 tricks
A void (an absent suit)	2 tricks	3 tricks

A short suit has a slightly greater value if it is part of one of two suits bid by partner. The short suit also has a slightly greater value even with three trumps if they are headed at least by a Queen.

When a hand contains two short suits, only one of them should be valued—if they are unequal in length, value only the *shorter*. A void is valued in preference to a singleton, and a singleton in preference to a doubleton. To value more than one short suit with the same trumps is an obvious duplication.

The sum of tricks in trump, long and short suits will automatically give the precise total count of playing-tricks or winners in support of partner's trump bid of one. For valuation of bids higher than one see the two-bid and the Rule of Two and Three.

Illustration:

Opening Hand
(spades bid)

4 ♠ A K 7 6 3

1 ♥ K 8 7 5

0 ♦ 4 3 2

0 ♣ 9

5 playing-tricks

¹ The Queen may be counted as 1 trick with the Knave.

² The ruffing-tricks do not increase in value with five trumps

Valuation of possible Dummies

(1)	(2)	(3)
1½ ♠ QJ 5 4	1 ♠ 10 9 8 5 4	1 ♠ 10 9 8 5 4
1½ ♥ A 6 4 3	2 ♥ A 6 4 3 2	1 ♥ 9 6 4 3 2
2 ♦ 9	2 ♦ 9	3 ♦ .
1½ ♣ A 5 4 3	0 ♣ 4 3	0 ♣ 4 3 2
6½ playing-tricks in support of spades	5 playing-tricks in support of spades	5 playing-tricks in support of spades

VALUING THE HAND IN DEFENCE

Against opponents' trump bid, low-card tricks in side suits cease to exist, and the ruffing value of short suits becomes, as a rule, very uncertain. There remain only trumps and honours in side suits.

The sum of trump tricks and taking honours gives the measure of strength against opponents' trump bid. A singleton may be counted as one trick when the player is reasonably certain of obtaining a ruff.

THE TRIPLE VALUATION OF THE SAME HAND

The fact that short suits are of value only in the Responding Hand (prospective Dummy) and that long suits cannot be counted against opponents' trump bid, while honours generally retain their value no matter what the final bid, introduces tremendous variations in the total trick-taking worth of the same hand. Accordingly, the same hand must be valued in three ways during the bidding:

1. *At one's own bid:* Count honour-tricks and long-suit tricks (in both the trump and side suits)—but not the short-suit tricks.

2. *In support of partner's bid:* Count everything—trump tricks (length and honours), side-suit tricks (length and honours) and short-suit or ruffing-tricks (a short suit and honours).

3. *Against opponents' trump bids:* Count honour and trump

or more for the reason that it is unjustifiable to assume that the Declarer holds more than three losing cards of the suit of which the Dummy holds, say, a singleton.

tricks but not low cards in side suits. Count exceptionally a singleton and a void.

Illustration:

♠ 6 ♥ A K 7 5 4 ♦ A 4 2 ♣ K J 7 5

This hand is worth a maximum of $6\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks at a heart bid, if partner supports that bid. If he fails to support it, the assumption of favourable distribution fails, and the hand is worth but $5\frac{1}{2}$ winners with hearts as trumps. It is worth $7\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks in support of partner's club bid. Finally, against opponents' spade bid, it is worth the maximum of 4 expected winners.

It follows that according to one's own, partner's or opponents' bid, the same hand must be valued from three different standpoints—a process indispensable even to an average player.

The bid to choose is generally the one which, when compared with other bids, holds out expectation of the greatest number of tricks.

CHAPTER V

QUANTITY BIDDING

THE TOTAL of playing-tricks or winners held in the Opening or Responding Hand can be reasoned out by each partner from the number of *times* the hand is bid or raised.

Quantity bidding between partners operates on exactly the same principle as a taximeter: each turn of the wheel registers its proportionate amount. *Starting with a definite minimum*, each new bid or Raise, every time the player speaks, shows an additional trick value, be it as little as a 'plus' value or better distribution. By adding the total tricks of one hand to the total shown by partner's bids the total for the *combined hands* can be determined mathematically.

In this total of sure and probable winners or playing-tricks are included not only honour-tricks but establishable low cards in side suits and, in the Responding Hand, ruffing-tricks as well.

Bidding to show total quantity preceded by many years the more complex bidding to show honours or quality. In the early days of Bridge—as indeed with beginners to-day—no distinctions were made between Opening, Secondary and other bids to indicate different honour or defensive strength of hands. To-day, the inferences dealing with quantitative bidding between partners are still the most important. An Opening one-bid or a Secondary one-bid may differ in honour-tricks, but both show the same *total playing-tricks*.

THE MECHANICS OF RAISES AND REBIDS

Theoretically Raises and Rebids are based upon logical assumptions of trick expectancy in partner's hand. There are 13 tricks at any bid, of which partner's share is about 3 tricks in honours and low cards—the number which you temporarily assume he can win, until better information is available.

Therefore in order to contract for any bid of one the Opening Hand requires about 4 playing-tricks which, when added to the assumed 3 tricks in partner's hand, make up the total of 7 playing-tricks.

Thereafter the Opening Hand requires about 1 playing-trick more for each increase of the contract which he voluntarily bids.

The Responding Hand in turn discounts its first 3 playing-tricks which are already taken for granted by the Opening bidder in his bid. Thereafter the Responding Hand can raise *once* for each playing-trick held in excess of 3.

For instance, assume that the Opening Hand bids one spade and partner raises to three spades. Decoding partner's message, the Opening bidder makes the inference: 'A double Jump from one to three confirms my assumption of 3 tricks and shows 2 tricks in addition, making 5 tricks in all, together with adequate trump support. I have previously shown at least 4 playing-tricks, which gives for our combined hands 9 playing-tricks up to this point.'¹

THE SCALE OF RAISES AND REBIDS

Theoretically, the general rule to raise once for each trick in excess of 3, and to rebid once (if you are the Opening Hand) for each trick in excess of 4, is correct and logical. In practice, however, this rule must be considerably modified and adapted to each individual hand. The one-trick unit is often too large and many Raises and Rebids are made with only an extra $\frac{1}{2}$ trick and at times with even a 'plus'

¹ In the Culbertson System there is an alternative method for Raises and Rebids called *Plastic Valuation*. With this method, the player, instead of adding up the playing-tricks separately, considers the hand *as a whole*, as a block-unit. The player then visualizes the *minimum strength previously known to or assumed by partner*, and raises or rebids for each additional trick-taking value. Plastic Valuation requires exact knowledge of partner's 'expectancies'. A player must first learn how to diagnose a hand trick by trick, and only when different types of minimums are quite familiar to him may he make use of the Plastic method. (See Chapter VI.)

value. In numerous instances one should raise on less than 3 expected tricks; in many other instances a Rebid with 1 full trick would be quite unjustified, and in others a Rebid with even a slight plus value becomes imperative. Raises and Rebids are often much too flexible and finely drawn to be measured by full or even half-trick values; to leave out of account shadings and specific bidding situations is like fishing with a net through which all but the biggest fish escape. In the following broad schedules of Raises and Rebids I shall attempt, as much as possible, to take into account the factor of flexibility and 'shaded' values, but no Bridge method can be used successfully unless its greater part is unsaid and left to the player's imagination.

RAISES

(ASSUMING PARTNER OPENS WITH A SUIT BID OF ONE)

There are three kinds of Raises:

- (a) *Single* (minimum)—from one to two.
- (b) *Double* (strength)—from one to three.
- (c) *Game* (great strength)—from one to four in majors and to five in minors.

Raises from one to five in majors and to six in minors should, as a rule, be preceded by a Forcing Take-out.

A Raise from one to four in a minor shows a strong, unbalanced hand, sufficiently strong and unbalanced to try for game in a minor since it shuts out the alternative three no-trump. The general make-up of the hand should be considered, and the possibility of its being profitably played at no-trump; and in hands containing honour-trick strength, which might justify three Raises of a minor suit bid, only two of these Raises should be given, so that partner may bid three no-trump if the structure of his hand suggests that contract.

The range of *single Raises* is from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ (inclusive) playing-tricks.

Single Raises are of two kinds:

- (a) *Shaded Raises*, and
- (b) *Full Raises*.

A Raise with $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 playing-tricks is called a *shaded Raise*. There are two occasions when a shaded Raise must be given:

1. When a pass by the Responding Hand may close the bidding and thus prevent partner from re-entering the bidding. It must be remembered that the range of hands held by the Opening Hand may vary from a minimum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks to powerful hands containing 5 and even $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, to say nothing of low-card tricks.

2. When the Opening Hand persists in bidding after a previous pass by the Responding Hand. Such a Raise may be called a secondary Raise. A secondary Raise (a Raise after a previous pass) should also be used with hands containing a full Raise but less than 1 honour-trick, provided the opponent on the right is keeping the bidding open for partner.

The count of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 playing-tricks is on the borderline between a single and a double Raise. Much will depend on partner's psychology, vulnerability and distribution. As a rule, hands which count up to $4\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks, with at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ in honours, are worth a double Raise; and even hands which total almost 5 playing-tricks, but with less than 2 tricks in honours, should usually be given but one Raise. Here the danger of misleading partner into a Penalty Double or a Slam try is too great to run the risk of a double one. A single Raise will almost always include from 1 to 2 honour-tricks. After a single Raise partner is expected not to rebid his hand unless he holds at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks or strong distribution. The occasional loss of a game will be more than counterbalanced by the considerable saving in penalties.

The problem of distinguishing between a shaded single Raise and a sound full Raise is generally solved satisfactorily in the course of later bidding. However, to be on the safe side, the Opening Hand should, as a rule, *assume that partner's first Raise (or No-trump Take-out) is shaded and should avoid contracting for the game unless he is strong enough to cope with a nearly blank hand*. Lack of this precaution explains the con-

siderable losses suffered by players who jump directly to game on hands which, though technically sound if partner holds but a normal Raise or a negative no-trump Take-out, *fail to give partner any leeway if he should hold but a shaded Raise or Take-out*. There are few greater annoyances in Bridge than the type of partner who, every time one gently whispers, roars back as though one is deaf and dumb; except, perhaps, the type of partner, who, when you roar at him with Jump bids of two no-trump or double raises, answers with stony silence.

The range of *double Raises* is approximately from 5 to 6 playing-tricks. It includes, as a rule, between 2 and 3 honour-tricks, except after an opponent's Double, when it may be a shut-out Raise. This is one of the few situations in which a shut-out Raise is permitted. With less than 2 honour-tricks a single Raise should be used; with $3\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks a Forcing Take-out, *preliminary to a subsequent Raise*, is generally available.

A double Raise (from one to three) is a strength-showing bid and, although it is not Forcing, partner is expected *not to pass it* except with a hand distributed 4-3-3-3 which at the same time contains but $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. In this respect the bidding situation of *one spade, three spades* is quite similar to *one spade, two no-trump*.

The range of Raises to game in majors or minors is from $6\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks, provided that the hand contains (a) strong trump support and (b) from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 plus honour-tricks.

Theoretically, $7\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks when added to the Opening Hand's 4 playing-tricks should produce about five-odd—and they do. In practice, however, it is important to remember that the Responding Hand, in order to be on the safe side, bases its game Raises on a *minimum* of 3 playing-tricks in the Opening Hand, and even $2\frac{1}{2}$, rather than on a *probability of 4 tricks*.

The triple Raise (from one to four in majors and to five in minors) is, paradoxically enough, partly a shut-out bid and partly in the nature of a mild Slam try. It may show a hand such as (spades are trumps):

♠ A 9 8 6 4 ♥ 7 ♦ J 9 ♣ A Q 4 3 2

or a hand such as

♠ K J 8 3 ♥ A Q 10 4 ♦ K Q 8 2 ♣ 6

It follows that even if a hand contains $6\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ winners but less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, the extra Raise should be 'pulled in' and the hand should be raised from one to three rather than from one to four in majors. Similarly with minors. In all such situations it is far better to run the very slight risk that partner may fail to rebid to game, than the risk that partner may attempt a Slam. When a hand contains $3\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks a Raise to game should be deferred in favour of a Forcing Take-out. With a hand such as

♠ K 5 4 3 2 ♥ A Q 3 ♦ A K 5 ♣ 7 2

after partner's Opening bid of one spade, there could be no serious harm in Forcing even with a three-card diamond suit rather than befogging partnership inferences with a direct Raise to four or five spades.

By reversing the inferences from raising, the Opening Hand is able to deduce from the number of partner's Raises the *maximum count of playing-tricks in support of his bid*.¹

THE SCALE OF REBIDS—THE OPENING HAND

Second and subsequent bids by the Opening Hand are called Rebids. A Rebid in the same suit points to added strength in trumps. A Rebid in no-trump generally points to added honour strength. A Rebid which does not increase the contract merely points to a different distribution.

Like Raises, Rebids are also classed as 'shaded' and full. The range of one full Rebid is between 1 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks or low-card tricks. Shaded Rebids are made on but $\frac{1}{2}$ trick, sometimes even a 'plus' value, over the minimum previously shown. In fact, after partner's double Raise in a suit or Jump two no-trump Take-out, there may be nothing left for a justifiable Rebid but the grin of a Cheshire cat—or,

¹ In Opening bids of two, three and four the original assumptions of the bidder's minimums are different, and consequently the scale of Raises and Rebids is also different.

perhaps, the absence of the horrible 4-3-3-3 distribution. On the other hand, to indulge in a shaded Rebid after partner makes a minimum response is simply to invite disaster, especially with a partner who is quick on the trigger. Shaded Rebids may or may not be used, according to the bidding situation—the score, the nature of partner's response and the like. A hand that counts up to $6\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks has two *full* Rebids and one *shaded* Rebid; i.e., it can certainly be bid twice more after a Raise from partner, and, when the Opening bidder is hard pressed, even once again.

Each Rebid shows a possible winner, however slight, in addition to those already expected by partner. Failure to adhere strictly to this principle results in *duplication of bids*, or in bidding twice on the same trick values, which is the bane of most players.

To illustrate, if the Opening Hand holds:

♠ A Q 9 3 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ 10 9 6 ♣ Q 5 4

This hand, with $3\frac{1}{2}$ winners (including $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks) at spades, is a minimum Opening one spade bid. Should partner raise to three spades, the Opening bidder, having absolutely nothing new to tell partner, should pass. Add either the ♦ Q or a low spade, and the hand has a Rebid—either three no-trump or four spades, respectively.

Partnership bidding is like drawing upon a joint account where the available supply is the balance left after values previously shown (or assumed) are deducted.

In gauging the number of tricks to expect in partner's hand, a player works with two sets of inferences. When partner passes or has not yet made any bid (in the latter case, for safety, he should be regarded as having passed), a player *assumes* a certain safe maximum—usually 2 tricks vulnerable or 3 tricks not vulnerable. When partner has spoken even once, the situation is radically changed: a player may now assume a *definite minimum* and build upon a sounder foundation. Each subsequent bid or Raise adds another link to the chain of inferences.

The Scale of Rebids is therefore not quite the same when partner bids or raises as when he passes. When partner has

spoken, *at least* 2½-3 and even 4 winners can be expected in his hand; when partner passes, the expectancy is *at most* 3 winners and it may dwindle almost to zero. Consequently the margin of safety is also different. Much will also depend on whether partner displays decided strength or merely responds with minimums. Even a full Rebid should be avoided after partner's sign of weakness, but the slightest excuse is valid for a Rebid to game after partner jumps the bid from one to three in a suit or to two no-trump.

THE SCALE OF REBIDS WHEN PARTNER SUPPORTS

Count the number of total tricks in the hand; deduct 4 tricks and bid once again for each remaining trick. Modify this general principle according to the bidding situation. (See also Plastic Valuation.)

To illustrate (the figures in parentheses represent the sum of playing-tricks—probable winners—at spades):

1. ♠ A K 10 6 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ A 10 7 ♣ 9 5 3 (4)
2. ♠ A K 10 6 ♥ 8 5 ♦ A 10 7 ♣ K 9 5 3 (5)
3. ♠ A K 10 6 ♥ 8 ♦ A 10 7 5 ♣ K 9 5 3 (5½)
4. ♠ A K 10 6 ♥ 8 ♦ A Q 10 7 ♣ K J 5 3 (6½)

Assuming in all four hands that partner has raised from one to two spades:

Hand 1 counts but 4 tricks and has no Rebid.

Hand 2 counts 5 tricks and technically has one Rebid; since partner's single Raise probably shows less than 5 playing-tricks, the Rebid is not used. Combined hands will hardly stretch to a game bid.

Hand 3 counts 5½ tricks, equal to one full and one shaded Rebid. A bid of three spades invites partner to bid four spades if his first Raise is not too weak. One should, as a rule, allow some leeway to partner and rely upon his greed; if he passes, the game is at best doubtful, and the valuable part-score is assured. Ninety-nine times in a hundred *he* (or she) will not pass.

Hand 4 counts 6½ tricks and has two full Rebids, justifying a bid of four spades. First he should make the *inferential Forcing bid* of three diamonds. If the Responding Hand

shows maximum strength, a Slam is in sight; if the Responding Hand bids three spades, four spades can be bid. Situations will arise in which, to save a game or even a part-score, the Opening Hand should *overbid for a sacrifice*. The procedure is quite simple. The Opening bidder first determines the available number of tricks in the combined hands. He can now deliberately overbid by as many tricks as the mathematics of game-penalty equivalents justify. When vulnerable, a player should not count shaded values, nor should he anticipate an average break of his trump suit.

It is the Opening and not the Responding Hand, who, as a rule, must take the initiative in deciding when and by how much to overbid. For the Responding Hand the overbidding range must be limited by its shaded and, in certain cases, shut-out Raises. This is necessary in order to avoid the ever-present danger of bidding several times on the same values.

THE SCALE OF REBIDS WHEN PARTNER PASSES

When partner passes an Opening bid of one in a suit, the inference is that he holds less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks in support and less than an Ace and a Queen in high cards. Consequently the tactics of the Opening bidder when opponents are bidding should be based on a certain safety margin. Since it is quite likely that the margin of expected tricks in the Dummy may dwindle to as little as $\frac{1}{2}$ trick, it is advisable to provide for this contingency in order to avoid unjustifiable overbidding. The Culbertson Rule of Two and Three, which is discussed more fully in connection with 'The Defending Hand', fits this situation very accurately. When First Hand's Opening bid has been overcalled by opponents, the Opening bidder should gamble on no more than 2 tricks in partner's hand when vulnerable, and on no more than 3 tricks when not vulnerable. This provides against the excessive penalties which are often suffered through unwarranted Rebids.

When vulnerable, there are occasions when even the '2 trick' margin of safety is not enough. Sometimes the strength of the trump suit itself is extremely dubious, and

its potential playing-trick value must be calculated on the basis of unfavourable distribution. It is then more advisable to pass unless the player is reasonably certain not to lose more than 2 tricks if partner's hand is blank and opponents seriously threaten to score game.

When not vulnerable, the '3 trick' margin of expectancy may occasionally be increased slightly in order to defend against the part-score which the opponents seem likely to make. This principle should not be carried to extremes, however, as penalties of 4 undertricks, not vulnerable, are altogether too great.

When the Opening bid is immediately overcalled by Second Hand and the Overcall is passed by partner, the situation is slightly different. It is quite possible for partner to hold even more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ tricks in support or as many as $1\frac{1}{2}$ plus honour-tricks. His hand may not be quite good enough for a free bid or a free Raise, but he may still have sufficient strength in his hand to support a partner who can rebid. The Rule of Two and Three should be stretched in such instances, making it advisable for the Opening Hand to rebid on lighter values than he would require to rebid if partner passed with no intervening bid.

REVALUATION OF THE OPENING HAND

When partner, instead of raising, takes out with a different bid, the Opening Hand becomes the Responding Hand in turn and must be *revalued* accordingly.

If partner bids a new suit, the Opening bidder's trump support, honour-tricks, long-suit tricks and ruffing-tricks (if any), when in excess of 3 or 4 winners, may justify a new Raise or Raises. To illustrate, South holds:

♠ A 10 3 2 ♥ A K J 7 ♦ Q J 8 6 ♣ 9

South opens with one heart. If partner responds with one spade, the revaluation of South's hand in support of spades will show 2 tricks for the singleton club and $1\frac{1}{2}$ tricks for trump Ace and length, or, in all, three extra Raises over and above the 4 playing-tricks in hearts and diamonds. His next bid, therefore, will be four spades.

Again consider the following dialogue of inferences:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 N T	Pass	Pass	Pass

This dialogue, when decoded into inferences, reads:

South: 'I have a minimum of about 4 playing-tricks, of which at least 2½ are in honours, and a biddable heart suit.'

North: 'You can count on about 1 honour-trick in my hand. I may not have support for your hearts, but I can offer a biddable spade suit. It is possible that my hand does include support for hearts, but at this stage of the bidding I feel it more important to give you a message regarding the distribution of my hand.'

South: 'I cannot strongly support your spades. My hearts are too weak to rebid. In honours my hand has slightly more than the bare minimum shown by my Opening bid.'

A NECESSARY SIMPLIFICATION

In deciding upon an Opening suit bid of one, it is quite unnecessary and superfluous to bother with counting the low-card tricks in order to determine the total of playing- or 'probable' tricks. It so happens that practically all hands containing 3 or more honour-tricks *automatically include at least 1 low-card trick* which gives at least the 3½ total tricks required for a one-bid.

Illustration:

♠ A J 10 3 ♥ A 7 6 ♦ Q 8 5 ♣ 7 3 2

is a minimum Opening one-spade bid. It is worth 1½ tricks for ♠ A J 10. 1 trick for the fourth trump and 1 trick for ♥ A, making slightly more than 3½ playing-tricks or, with the plus value of ♦ Q, a *probability* of 4.

A glance at the hand to scan the honours is sufficient to determine whether to bid or pass.

This simplification is much needed to-day when tens of thousands, in picking up their hands, go through the same futile motions of rounding up their 'probables' and wasting their power of concentration, badly needed elsewhere.

Only when the bidding reaches higher stages does it become necessary to revalue the hand and to count in the low cards.

BIDDABLE TRUMP SUITS

The most important thing in Contract is to assure the minimum safety of the partnership trump suit.

In trump plays all the values of the combined hands depend upon the protection which the trump-suit 'fortress' affords them; if the trump suit is too weak to withstand the onslaught of repeated *forces* by the adversaries, the entire hand generally collapses.

The simple 'safety devices' and minimum requirements in dealing with trump suits, here formulated briefly for the first time, have been accepted by all master players.

First Principle:

Except with powerful suits, the value of any trump suit is not measured by length in a player's own hand, but by its length in the combined hands.

Illustration:

		North	
A K 5 4 3	West		East
A K 5 4		South	

Q 6 2
Q 6 3 2

These two distributions of the same suit are practically equivalent in value. Both suits have eight out of the thirteen trumps and are equally safe. To compensate for the extra length in the five-card suit (worth 1 trick), the extra length in the Dummy will usually bring in a trick by ruffing.

Second Principle:

The minimum requirements for any *biddable* suit are as follows:

At least four trumps with about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the suit. The honour-trick requirement is sometimes shaded, in order to give a more complete picture of hand distribution, and avoid the dangers of opening the bidding with no-trump.

Five-card trump lengths require but $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick in the

trump suit and can be shaded to a Q 10 or even J 10.

As a rule, even the following 'shaded' biddable suits may be bid (they are fairly safe considering the strict rule requiring at least Q x x for partner to raise): A J 9 x, K Q x x or Q J 10 x in either majors or minors, and, in addition, A J x x, K J x x or A 10 x x in minor suits, which offer a wider range of selection in the choice of a final contract. Five-card suits may be shaded to Q 10 x x x or J 10 x x x in either majors or minors, and, with very strong hands, even less.

Naturally, all *shaded* suits required proportionately greater honour strength outside (see Chapter VIII).

Third Principle:

Partner's minimum trump support will vary according to the length and strength of the trump suit shown by the Opening Hand.

The Opening Hand shows (a) a minimum trump suit by bidding the suit once, (b) a fair trump suit by bidding the same suit twice (one Rebid), and (c) a powerful trump suit, requiring no support whatever from partner, by bidding the same suit three times (two Rebids).

An Opening bid of three or more is equivalent to bidding the same suit three times.

THE TABLE OF BIDDABLE MINIMUM TRUMP BIDS, REBIDS AND RAISES

Whatever be the general strength of the hand, the minimum trump suit must never be bid again unless partner supports it; nor should it be supported with less than a Q 3 2 or four small trumps. With all Opening one- and two-bids partner must assume a minimum trump suit and take out or pass when holding less.

Minimum length and strength with Declarer

1. When any trump suit is bid *once* it shows a *minimum* of about 3 trump tricks. In other words,

Minimum required from partner to raise

1. At least Q 3 2 or four small trumps, very rarely A x or K x. J 10 2 is almost equivalent to

either four cards headed by 1½ honour-tricks or five cards headed by ½ honour-trick.

Minimum trump suits

A Q x x	K x x x x
A J 10 x	Q J x x x
K Q 10 x	x x x x x

2. When, without being supported, any trump suit is bid *twice* it shows about 4 trump tricks.²

Probable

'Four Trump Trick' suits

A K 10 x x	K Q 9 x x x
A Q J x x	K J 9 x x x
A J 9 x x x	Q J 10 x x x

3. When, without being supported, any trump suit is bid *three times* (whether gradually or at once), it guarantees at least 5 sure trump tricks.³

Near-solid suits

A K Q J 10	A Q J x x x
A K J 10 x x	K J 10 9 x x x
A K x x x x x	K Q J x x x x

Partner having assumed only a fair trump suit, such powerful suits must be rebid again by the Opening Hand.

Q 3 2. Holding less, partner should either pass or, when able take out with some other bid.¹

Until further information is disclosed, partner must, as a rule, assume a minimum trump suit in the Opening Hand.

2. Partner may raise the Rebid suit with three small trumps, Q x or J 10, and at times even with two low trumps.

3. All Opening bids of three or more guarantee at least 5 sure trump tricks and consequently require no trump support from partner. Partner may raise even with a singleton.

Practically solid suits

The higher Grand Slam premium necessitates a new convention for showing a very strong trump suit, developed by the author and embodied in the Culbertson System of 1933.

See Take-outs or Slam Bids for the new bid to show a practically solid trump suit.

¹ With a hand containing a justifiable Raise, and yet no other bid, a Raise on but A x, K x or three small trumps should be made. Fortunately, such situations are rare.

² Certain situations call for strategic Rebids of suits weaker than those in the list of 'Four Trump Trick' suits above.

³ Exceptionally, suits may be rebid up to a three-bid as a sign-off.

CHAPTER VI

PLASTIC VALUATION

IN THE *Contract Bridge Blue Book* of 1930 the author briefly mentioned Plastic Valuation of suits and hands as an alternative method to the Distributional Count. At that time, a full analysis of the subject would have been of interest only to a handful of master players. In fact, Plastic Valuation involves mental processes so complex that further search for a method of logical presentation was required; so that the subject, which still remains a mystery to experts themselves, hidden behind the inner workings of their subconscious minds, could be elucidated simply and clearly.

Since then the author has given considerable time to the scientific analysis of this all-important phase of Contract bidding, in the hope of finding a simple formula or method that would unlock the storehouse of the experts' subconscious knowledge and experience. These mental processes are now for the first time scientifically analysed and clarified and, in presenting the Culbertson theory of Plastic Valuation to thousands who are anxious to graduate into the expert class, the writer hopes that he has at least partly accomplished this task and that other Bridge minds will carry it forward.

There is little doubt that Plastic Valuation is the most important principle ever discovered in the annals of Bridge; even superficial knowledge of these mental processes will enable thousands of players to enter the experts' mysterious sanctum. The writer also believes that it will revolutionize the teaching of bidding and play, especially defensive play.

So far, relatively few experts have succeeded, after years of trial and error, in hitting upon the *right mental sequences*. These are now placed within the reach of the many, thus adding to their intellectual enjoyment of the game. Not only that. Plastic Valuation does not merely copy expert

players' mental processes, many of which are quite imperfect and even wrong, but offers a scientific model for all to follow, which will especially benefit expert players themselves, whose subconscious processes, though quite logical in most respects, necessarily require correction in others.

Plastic Valuation is the quintessence, the philosophy, so to speak, of any expert player's Bridge.

The writer cannot urge too strongly a careful study of this chapter on Plastic Valuation, for it will not only show practical results by improving a player's game almost immediately, but is in itself a valuable exercise in scientific thinking.

THE DISTRIBUTIONAL COUNT AND PLASTIC VALUATION

At the beginning of Chapter II, I stated that bidding is *mental play* and briefly described the abstract processes that take place when a player considers any hand.

When the Dummy is put down, a player first considers the different kinds of tricks he expects to make and the cards he expects to lose, and then proceeds to develop them. *Similarly, during the bidding, the player also considers the various kinds of tricks he expects to make and cards he expects to lose at a specified bid.* And the only difference from the actual play is that his bidding processes of play are mental, abstract—a sort of dress rehearsal for the real show that is to come. These mental processes in bidding are parallel to the processes that take place during the play, except that they are based on certain logical assumptions as to the cards that partner and opponents hold, as derived from various bids, bidding situations and even the absence of bids (negative inferences). Thus, bidding and play are two sides of the same medal; both are essentially based on the process of elimination and the count of winners and losers; both deal with various kinds of tricks (honour, long-suit and short-suit); and both require that two hands be combined as one for the single harmonious purpose of either the abstract or the actual play.¹

¹ There is another essential difference between bidding and

Valuation is the heart and soul of bidding, comparable to the 'estimate of the situation' in military principles. Without a correct estimate of probable winners or losers during the bidding it is impossible to reach a partnership agreement for the selection of the most worth-while bid. Valuation is the count of winners or losers in a player's own hand as well as in the combined hands of the partnership.

Since the early days of Bridge a number of different counts or methods of valuation have been evolved, but the simplest and the most precise are the Culbertson 4-5-6 Count for no-trump bids and the Distributional Count for suit bids. The Distributional Count estimates the various winners (honour-, long-suit and ruffing-tricks) according to definite, fixed values. The Opening and Responding Hands, in turn, count their winners and then each partner translates the total into as many bids as the hand warrants. There is, however, another and radically distinct method of valuation, especially for trump bids, which is based not on any previously fixed values but on the *natural* process of elimination. It does not follow by any means that the Distributional Count is inferior. Either one of the two methods, if properly used, will bring the same results.

The Distributional Count is a mathematical way of solving the problem of valuation and, like most things mathematical, requires for its success diabolically rigorous precision. It necessarily lacks, however, the elasticity and depth play: the play of hands is always restricted to one final bid, but in bidding, before the final bid is selected, there are a series of 'mental plays' or bids, where, with each new kind of bid offered, there is a different combination of trick-taking values, the only stable values being honour-tricks. To use a military analogy, Bidding is Strategy, a series of planned manoeuvres to secure the best position (contract); while play is the actual battle or tactical execution of the planned campaign. To continue this analogy, as in war many battles are actually lost before they even begin, so in Bridge many hands are irretrievably compromised by inferior bidding strategy before a single card is led. Of course, it is also true that the best bid in the world 'can give only what it's got' and the best laid plans will crumble if the execution is inferior.

of the Plastic method which, due to its 'naturalness', offers greater adaptability to peculiarities of individual hands. For this and other reasons Plastic Valuation is the expert player's method of evaluating his hands.

It must be remembered that no expert player, whatever the system he follows, ever makes exclusive use of any artificial or mathematical count. He only retains the honour-trick table as a quick and ready reference for obvious bids, such as Opening suit bids, and for conveying inferences to partner as to his honour-trick strength. His real method is the *elimination of losers*, or Plastic Valuation. The fact remains that the study and understanding of the Distributional Count is an indispensable step toward the more complex inferential methods of Plastic Valuation. Without any knowledge of the Distributional Count, which teaches how to count *and play* the winners, Plastic Valuation remains a mystery. But once the Distributional Count is so thoroughly assimilated that it runs, so to speak, in a Bridge player's blood, it should be supplemented and eventually superseded by the more subtle and flexible Culbertson method of Plastic Valuation for experts. In this sense the Distributional Count may be compared to a temporary wooden structure designed eventually to give place to a more practical and permanent structure of finely carved stone.

WHAT IS PLASTIC VALUATION?

Plastic Valuation is the name given to a series of logical inferences which fall into three successive steps, as follows:

First Step.—*A player counts the losers and winners of each suit in his own hand.*

Second Step.—*A player visualizes (paints a mental picture of) his partner's hand on the basis of minimum strength and distribution as shown by partner's bids. If partner has not bid the mental picture is based on assumed averages.*

Third Step.—*A player eliminates, within each suit, some of the originally assumed losers of his hand by adding the values inferred from partner's bids, creating thereby a new composite picture made up from the known or assumed elements of the two hands. The total*

of sure and probable losers of this new imaginary hand determines the selection and the margin of safety of the contract. During these processes of visualization, the 'imaginary' hand undergoes further transformation under the influence of values shown or denied by opponents.¹

Perhaps a good analogy of Plastic Valuation would be to compare it with the mental processes of a scientist or a detective. Partner's bids or passes are clues that help you to visualize or mentally picture his hand as a whole. If partner has previously passed, or has not yet bid, you then mathematically assume a certain reasonable share of possible winners in his hand, and these you temporarily add to your own hand; this assumption, like the hypothesis of a scientist, may be instantly invalidated when partner's or opponents' bids disclose some new information. If partner makes a bid, the minimum honour, trump or other values that must be present in his hand to justify that bid are added to those in your own hand, and, as the bidding develops, the gaping holes of the losers of your own hand are gradually filled in from partner's and opponents' contributions.

In this manner a composite picture consisting of thirteen cards is gradually filled in from the original twenty-six cards of the partnership—a beautiful intellectual process when performed by an expert, each deft stroke of the brush being a logical inference. Obviously, Plastic Valuation requires a thorough knowledge of the minimums held by both partners, for if responses are blurred and inferences are illogical the picture will be correspondingly distorted.

DO YOU COUNT WINNERS OR LOSERS?

The first important question to decide in Plastic Valuation is whether a player should count his *winners* or his *losers*. Some players determine their losers by counting the winners and deducting them from 13; others prefer to deduct the losers and thus determine the winners. Mathematically the

¹ It is a most remarkable fact that a very similar process underlies the subconscious creation of dreams, except that in dreams the composite picture is made up of *apparently* unrelated subjects.

result is the same either way, but from the standpoint of facility in mental processes there is a tremendous difference. It is a fundamental law of the human mind that it naturally tends to take short cuts, rebelling against twisted 'uphill' thought processes. As a rule, the *winners* should be counted with no-trump bids; and the *losers* should be counted with trump bids, especially when the hand is of unbalanced distribution. Whenever partner's and opponents' bidding enables the player to 'place' suit lengths and key cards, counting the losers will prove to be the shortest cut.

With a hand such as

1. ♠ A Q 2 ♥ A 8 7 3 ♦ K 9 4 ♣ A 10 9

counting the losers is a long and laborious process. Here the losers are fluid and indefinite, while the winners in the shape of Aces, Kings and Queens stand out in bold relief. But, when valuing the hand, say, in support of partner's spade bid with a hand such as

2. ♠ K 10 9 8 2 ♥ 7 ♦ A K 10 7 6 ♣ 6 2

to count the total winners rather than the losers would be to put the cart before the horse. The losers are few and quite definite, and therefore easier to count. The five-card spade suit has probably no loser, the diamond suit has at the most 1 loser, and 1 of the 3 losers in hearts and clubs is 'covered' by an Ace or King-Queen in either suit—the minimum outside strength that justifies an Opening bid of one spade. With 3 losers at the most, the combined hands are worth 10 tricks. Hence a Raise to four spades is correct. The same result is obtained by the use of the Distributional Count. The hand counts 2 winners in spades, 2 winners in hearts, 3 winners in diamonds and none in clubs—a total of 7 winners, which justifies a Raise to four spades and, if required, a possible Raise to five spades.

It is true that in the Distributional Count only the winners are counted in any hand. All such winners, however, are based on 'quick' fixed values, and the count becomes therefore practically automatic. Plastic Valuation, on the contrary, is very largely based on the count and subsequent elimina-

tion of losers through logical inferences. To hands in which the losers are too numerous or indefinite for this method, Plastic Valuation is difficult to apply. This is especially true with Opening suit bids of one on hands distributed 4-4-3-2 or 4-3-3-3 until partner or opponents have spoken. But the more 'body' there is to the hand the more effective Plastic Valuation becomes.

Plastic valuation of a suit. Count every missing Ace, King and Queen, and sometimes a missing Knave, in each long suit, as a loser; the balance of cards remaining are winners. The probability of 'dropping' a Queen or a Knave on the lead of an Ace or a King increases in proportion to the length of the suit, but, in counting the losers of the trump suit, assume unfavourable distribution when vulnerable and average (favourable) distribution when not vulnerable. Trumps that will win tricks, whatever the distribution of the remaining cards of the suit, are called *sure* winners. Trumps which will win tricks only if the distribution is average are held in reserve as possible losers until further information is available. Any honour combination that depends on a finesse should also be temporarily considered as containing possible losers. The 'probable losers' or the 'probable winners' are, for all practical purposes, equivalent. Two such possible losers equal a reasonably sure winner.

The next step is to *match up* one's own suit with the *fragments* of the same suit held by partner and opponents, as disclosed by his and their bids. If I hold, say, ♠ A K 7 4 3 and my partner raises my spade bid to two spades, my mental picture will be something like this

♠ A K 7 4 3 + ♠ 10 8 6 5 or + ♠ Q 8 6

Originally my judgment of the value of my spade suit was temporarily suspended. I had 3 remotely possible losers, 2 possible and 1 probable loser. Now the picture of my spade suit is more definite. Of one thing I am already reasonably certain: I have at the most 1 spade loser, for I refuse to entertain seriously the possibility of five spades headed by Knave-Ten held adversely, unless, of course, the *pattern of my entire hand* is something like 5-5-3-0, in which

case, according to the Culbertson Law of Symmetry, I should *fear* a distribution 5-5-3-0 or 5-4-4-0 of the spade suit.

If partner keeps on raising my spades, the suit now looks like 5 solid tricks. If, however, partner denies my spade bid by offering some other suit bid, the suit now shrinks to something like ♠ A K 7 ? ? which, incidentally, strangely reminds me of a dog with its tail cut off.

In this manner the player proceeds to *match up* each of his long and short suits with the fragments of the same suits held by partner with the object of locating definite losers and winners.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COMPOSITE HAND

The total number of probable losers in all suits deducted from 13 determines the strength of the hand. According to partner's responses, some of the assumed losers will become winners and others will become definite losers, while still others must remain doubtful. As the bidding unfolds, the strength or the weakness of the combined partnership hands is determined more and more accurately. At each step of bidding, partner and opponents bring in additional positive and negative inferences which modify the status of each suit, and consequently the total valuation of the hand. The number of losers, which at the beginning of the bidding might be considerable, is thus narrowed down to final definite losers. Here again the law of economy in human thought processes is the basis of the process of eliminating losers. A Bridge hand with its confusing array of honour combinations, singletons, doubletons and long suits is a chaos of contradictions to any mind, however keen. In order to grasp it clearly, the player *must reduce* the problem to smaller proportions and a more orderly sequence.¹ Hence, the necessity of determining, first, the total number

¹ To find a valuable pin, lost on the floor of a large room, is an easy task provided that, instead of reeling around the room in circles, the searcher subdivides the floor into a number of squares and investigates each square separately, thereby focusing the maximum of attention upon the minimum of space—a process similar to the elimination of losers in a Bridge hand.

of losers or, as the case may be, of winners in each suit and then in the hand.

The mind now grapples with, say, 6 possible losers instead of the original 13 cards. The next problem is how to turn as many as possible of these 6 losers into winners. Once more you match each suit against partner's, like a captain who carefully reviews each individual soldier of his company. Only in this manner does it become possible to perform the complex mental operation of creating a composite hand.

Let us say you have bid, vulnerable, one spade, holding:

♠ A Q 4 3 2 ♥ Q 2 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ J 10 2

Let us also say that the opponents pass, but your partner makes a series of bids. According to each *kind* of bid, you add to your own hand the inferred values from partner so that at each stage of the bidding the mental picture changes. The examples below show graphically and scientifically the mental processes of a master player and the plastic but profound transformations of the same hand. The reader is urged to study the examples carefully, for they illustrate a key process that takes place at every stage of bidding and play.¹ The figures or honours in bold type indicate trick values or their equivalent inferred from partner's bids. One may assume, say, ♦ A, but partner may actually hold ♣ K Q. Such values are equivalent.

1. *Your partner responds to your one spade with one no-trump.* You should therefore assume not more than three small spades, and possibly only two. Your five-card spade suit will accordingly shrink. He has no biddable suit, and therefore has either a 4-4-3-2 or a 4-3-3-3 distribution of the hand. In honours he has probably not more than 2 honour-tricks—

¹ In his forthcoming *Ready Guide to Leads and Plays* and master work entitled *Red Book of Leads and Plays*, Mr. Culbertson scientifically analyses for the first time the successive mental steps that underlie the all-important making of a definite plan when playing the Dummy or in defence. The chief reason why so many players really do not know how to play their hands in spite of years of experience is that their mental steps, instead of being in a natural, logical order, are topsyturvy, and so result in a crippled style of play.

otherwise he would have bid more than one no-trump. He may have as little as an Ace and a Queen—otherwise he would have passed.

In order to avoid unnecessary penalties, it is important to assume in partner's hand, as a rule, a reasonable minimum rather than a maximum, especially when vulnerable. Last, but not least, in weighing partner's hand on the delicate balance of inferences there is the factor of psychology always to be considered. *Who* is my partner? If he is a conservative type his one no-trump will show a fat $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks as his minimum. If he is a weak player, his minimum will vary from at least 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. While some conservative players are quite good, all weak players are over-conservative. Just as to an unpractised eye the face of any horse looks exactly like any other's, to a weak player any hand not richly studded with honours is 'nothing'. He fails to realize that there are fifty different kinds of 'nothings', and he has not learned the art of visualizing partner's possible great strength—an art which is just as difficult in a Bridge partnership as in life. If the partner is an erratic player (the worst type of player, who *thinks* he knows it all and, therefore, takes immediate and, usually, disastrous command of the entire situation) his minimum will range from cold zero to $\frac{1}{2}$ trick; holding more he will naturally fear that his partner's inborn stupidity may get him into trouble and, according to his mood, will bid higher himself or even pass. An erratic player has a stubborn little system all his own and it must be studied. Partner's responses must always be delicately attuned to each player's temperamental and technical make-up.

These and many other considerations underlie your plastic valuations of partner's one no-trump response to your bid of one spade. The effect of those inferences on your composite picture of the combined hands, when you fit your partner's holding into yours, is graphically shown below. Suppose that your hand is as follows (you bid one spade):

♠ A Q 4 3 2 ♥ Q 2 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ J 10 2

Your partner responds with one no-trump, showing that

he has at least an Ace and a Queen, let us say, but no Raise in spades. You now visualize a composite hand like this, your spades having dwindled in value:

♠ A Q 4 3 2 ♥ Q 2 ♦ A K Q ♣ Q J 10¹

2. *Your partner responds to your one-spade bid with a Raise to two spades.* His minimum will be something like this:

♠ J 8 7 5 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ 5 3 ♣ K 9 7 6

The plastic composite hand you now visualize is something like this:

♠ A Q J 8 7 ♥ Q 2 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ K J 10

3. *Your partner raises your bid of one spade to three spades.* You visualize (mentally reconstruct) his hand to justify his double Raise as something like this:

♠ J 9 8 5 ♥ A 5 4 ♦ A 2 ♣ K 9 8 3

You have reached this conclusion in the following manner. First, as to the distribution of the hand, your partner has *adequate trump support* and probably even four trumps to the Knave; he may hold three trumps headed by the King: his hand distribution would then be 3 (trumps) 4-5-1, with four- and five-card lengths too weak to mention, all of which is not very likely. He may conceivably hold three trumps headed by the King with the distribution 3 (trumps)-4-3-3; but his bid would then more likely have been two no-trump and not a Raise to three spades. He therefore has four trumps or more (and the chances are in favour of his holding at least the Knave) and a distribution such as 4 (trumps)-4-3-2 or 5-4-3-1. The value of your own trump suit is immediately increased so that it looks something like:

♠ A Q 4 3 2 + J 9 8 5 or ♠ A Q 4 3 2 + K 9 8 5

Now for the honour-tricks. A double Raise generally shows about 2½ honour-tricks. We therefore 'give to him' or *place* in his hand a couple of Aces and a King.

If his Raise is correct, he cannot have a stronger hand, for he would then have raised to four spades; nor can he have a weaker hand, for he would then only have raised to two

¹ Bold letters and figures indicate assumed values.

spades. It is true he may have a hand of a totally different structure and still have a correct Raise to three spades. For instance, he may hold:

♠ K 9 8 6 3 ♥ 5 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ K 9 8 3

For all practical purposes such alternative combinations are *equivalent* so long as the differences remain within the range of 1 trick. In the last example the ♥ A is absent, but it is advantageously replaced by a singleton heart and a stronger trump suit.

With these and other 'clues' the 'masked stranger' (partner's hand) is definitely identified out of millions of possible hands, and the mystery of the best bid is on the way to a satisfactory solution. The situation now stands as follows:

You hold:

♠ A Q 4 3 2 ♥ Q 2 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ J 10 2

Your partner probably holds:

♠ J 9 8 5 ♥ A 5 4 ♦ A 2 ♣ K 9 8 3

or the equivalent.

You originally had about 9 losers—at least 2 in spades, 2 in hearts, 2 in diamonds and 3 in clubs. But now some of your losers are eliminated or turned into winners through partner's support. And the composite, plastic picture of your hand is roughly:

♠ A Q 4 3 2 + J 9 8 5 ♥ A Q ♦ A K Q ♣ K J 10

The number of possible losers is now narrowed down to 4, of which at least 1 will become a winner through a finesse, end-play, or a possibility of discarding it on Dummy's established length in a side suit. Hence a bid of four spades is quite sound.

It is important to remember that the same plastic process which enables us to determine the strength and distribution of partnership hands *also enables us to determine the strength and distribution of opponents' hands*. It is a question of subtracting the *known* part from the known maximum total. In the foregoing example, we can determine precisely the maximum honour strength and partly the distribution of opponents' hands. Since ♠ A Q J, ♥ A Q, ♦ A K Q and ♣ K J 10

are already 'placed' in partnership hands, there remain for opponents only the following honours: ♠ K, ♥ K J, ♦ J and ♣ A Q. Again, since we can account for nine spades in partnership hands, there remain for the opponents only four spades distributed either 2-2, 3-1 or very rarely 4-0.¹ To go a step further: if either opponent holds not more than one or two spades, the remaining three suits *must be accordingly redistributed in the remaining eleven or twelve cards* of his hand. That means greater proportionate lengths, and, as the bidding progresses, it will furnish additional clues which frequently enable the player to rearrange the honour and distributional pattern of the opponents' hands. Thus, the Culbertson Plastic Principle solves the problem of how an expert player can divine and predict, frequently at the beginning of the hand, the precise length and strength of suits. This seeming clairvoyance, which always excites the admiration of an average player, is rendered even more mysterious because a master player will do all in his power to leave no trace behind by his bidding and will mix up his signals so skilfully that the *reading* of his hand is made difficult for the opponents without at the same time confusing his partner.

4. *Your partner raises your bid of one spade to four spades.* Without describing again your mental steps, suffice it to say that his hand as visualized by you is something like one of the following.

1. ♠ J 8 7 5 ♥ A 5 4 ♦ A 7 ♣ K Q 8 3

2. ♠ K 9 8 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ A 7 6 ♣ K Q 8 3

The first example is stronger in honour-tricks (3+), but the other example compensates for its meagre 2½ honour-tricks

¹ The Culbertson Law of Symmetry practically excludes the 4-0 distribution with certain types of hand configuration, and makes it highly probable with other types. Similarly the distribution 3-1 as against the distribution 2-2 can also be frequently inferred from the type of hand patterns. The Law of Symmetry belongs to the scientific study of Bridge in its advanced phases, and the author is preparing a special book on that fascinating and mysterious subject.

by a far better distribution of both the trump suit and the hand. Your plastically combined hand now reads something like this:

♠ A Q 4 3 2 + J 8 7 5 ♥ A Q ♦ A K Q ♣ K Q J

or

♠ A Q 4 3 2 + K 9 8 7 5 ♥ Q ♦ A K Q ♣ K Q J 10

In the first example the Raiser is 'placed' with 3+ honour-tricks. This is about the maximum he should have, for, if he held $3\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks, his better bid would have been a *Forcing Take-out* of, say, three clubs, following which he could show his spade support by a Raise. Had such bidding taken place it could have been justified only with at least an added ♠ K in Example 1. In that event our first composite hand accounts for every possible loser but 1 heart and 1 club—putting us in the Slam zone. According to the bidding subsequent to the *Forcing Take-out*, the partnership may satisfactorily account either for the ♥ K or ♣ A or both and, having further eliminated one or two more losers, arrive at a successful Small or Grand Slam bid.

There are still other intellectual clues or inferences which put the finishing touches on this fascinating creative process of plastic elimination, and thus turn every well-bid hand into a thrilling victory of the mind over the dark unknown. For instance, there is the important factor of opponents' bidding, which radically modifies the 'placing' of honours and suit lengths in partnership and opponents' hands. Before the cards can even be properly 'placed' it is necessary to solve the difficult problem of whether the opponents' bids mean what they say: Are they sincere, profound, bluffing or ignorant, and how much so? It is the true measure of a scientific player to suspend judgment and not to grab red-hot bricks simply because they look cool.

One of the main reasons why so many intelligent, experienced players find themselves at a dead standstill, in spite of their efforts to learn, is simply because their underlying mental processes are not in their natural sequence. They are somewhat like Golf players who have subconsciously ac-

quired atrocious form or violinists whose bows are not set quite properly.¹

The principle of the natural and proper co-ordination of muscles finds its counterpart in the principle of the natural and proper co-ordination of thought processes—in other words, fundamentally it is a question of the right System or, if you like, *style*.

In conclusion, the entire scheme of learning how to bid expertly is thus reduced to two simple steps: a player learns the underlying mental processes and, through Plastic Valuation, how to visualize and combine partnership hands. At the same time a player must acquire a working knowledge of the logical *minimums* and *maximums* in winners and losers conveyed through partnership bids and failures to bid.

The following story of what I believe to be the greatest pass in Bridge history vividly illustrates the mechanism of Plastic Valuation. It is an example of the remarkable precision of thought involved in the process of elimination when used by a master player.

THE GREATEST PASS IN BRIDGE HISTORY

This is a tale of how a masterful mind can *reconstruct from a single bid* his partner's entire hand with such uncanny precision that out of millions of possible hands the hand visualised is the only hand that partner could hold, assuming that his bid is correct.

The bidding and the hand actually occurred (with slight modifications) in the first Anglo-American Match, in which the United States team of four, captained by the writer, played against two selected English teams.

The master mind was my favourite man partner, Theo-

¹ As will be apparent in the author's forthcoming *Red Book of Leads and Plays*, the principal reason why there are relatively few masterful Dummy and Defensive players lies in the fact that the successive steps which go into the vastly important making of a 'plan of play' have been learned either in a wrong and illogical sequence or omitted altogether, leading as a result to top-heavy, complicated thinking.

dore A. Lightner. One bid made by me was the only clue that led him to a series of brilliant inferences and eventually culminated in the reconstruction of my entire hand. The bidding was:

Both sides vulnerable
Opponents do not bid

MR. LIGHTNER (Dealer)

THE AUTHOR

1 ♠

5 ♥ !

Pass !!!

Mr. Lightner held:

♠ A K Q J 5 2 ♥ J ♦ K Q 2 ♣ K J 10

A five-heart bid is a mighty urgent invitation to bid a Slam—practically a royal command, in fact. Is there a hero on the face of this earth who would have declined to bid six hearts? Especially when it is remembered that 3 honour-tricks is the minimum I had a logical right to expect in Mr Lightner's hand, and that he actually held 4 honour-tricks, to say nothing of his solid spade suit. Obviously only a beginner or a master mind could have passed with such a hand! My five-heart bid involved no special convention—in fact, such a bidding situation had never before occurred in our partnership game—but I trusted that my partner (and there is only one other in the world whom I could have trusted as much) would rise to the unusual occasion and reason the hand out. This is how he did it:

Step One: Why this startling five heart bid? Was there *another* and a more scientific bid? Decidedly yes! A Forcing Take-out of three hearts would guarantee that the bidding be kept open and at the same time it would offer the tremendous advantage of securing, while the bidding was still low, added information from my (Lightner's) responses. (See Forcing Take-outs.)

Step Two: This fellow Culbertson either has gone temporarily insane or has something startlingly unusual up his sleeve and is trying to signal and warn me. *Why didn't he make a Forcing three-heart bid?*

Step Three: The only reason is that he does not hold at

least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, and, since he bid only five hearts, he is obviously afraid of misleading me into contracting for a losing Slam bid. Therefore, he has no *outside trick*.

Step Four: A five heart bid strongly *invites* partner to bid six. Culbertson therefore practically guarantees 11 tricks *for combined hands*. It would be ridiculous to invite me (Lightner) to bid six, and not even be able to guarantee a five contract should I decline the invitation. In order to guarantee 11 tricks (five-odd) for the combined hands, Culbertson *cannot expect more than 2 sure winners in my hand*. It is true that I should have $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, but the third trick is merely a probability and not a reasonable certainty. Therefore, Culbertson has at least 9 tricks—9 sure winners in his hand.

Step Five: If Culbertson *guarantees* 9 tricks, and at the same time *has no outside trick* he can have nothing else than

♠ ? ♥ A K Q 8 7 6 5 4 3 ♦ ? ♣ ?

He cannot hold

♠ ? ♥ K Q 10 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♦ ? ♣ ?

because a Slam invitation without an Ace is quite risky.

The climax is now reached with dramatic suddenness and precision.

Step Six: The next problem is to place the remaining four cards. Culbertson *must have* at least one and very probably two spades. With a void in partner's bid suit, it would be highly dangerous to invite a Slam. There remain but two cards for clubs and diamonds, and here again the inference is strong that Culbertson holds a small diamond and a small club. If Culbertson held 2-0 he should have bid a direct Slam, for then his chances of a successful Slam would have been better than even, since opponents are more likely to lead a suit of which he has a void.

Hence Culbertson's hand when reconstructed must be:

♠ 6 3 ♥ A K Q 10 8 7 6 5 4 ♦ 7 ♣ 6

Step Seven: It follows that at least two outstanding Aces, in diamonds and clubs, are not only held by opponents, but in all probability they will win!

Conclusion: That was the hand that the author actually held. A hand of this type had never before occurred in our partnership game, and, frankly, I was quite stumped how to bid it. I had too many losers for a direct Small Slam bid, and had I made a Forcing three-heart Take-out I should have conveyed to Mr. Lightner the very inference that I tried to avoid, to wit: that I had some outside strength. I therefore had no other way but to 'create' a new bid, trusting that my brilliant partner would be able to interpret it. And that was why Mr. Lightner *passed* and by so doing made the greatest pass in the history of Bridge.

Playing *à la papa*, *à la mama*, a Small Slam bid and a penalty of 1 trick were inevitable.

The Culbertson System is built essentially from the standpoint of master players, and for this reason it eschews any purely artificial convention or inference that does not have its roots in the logic of the bidding situation. Thus, if we assume two demigods who are strangers playing together for the first time, *their* Plastic Valuation would be based on an inexorable logic, and, therefore, not a word need be exchanged between them as to the 'system' of Contract Bridge they play.

BOOK II

PARTNERSHIP LANGUAGE

CHAPTER VII

THE LANGUAGE OF BIDS

AFTER THE player has set a value on his hand at a given bid, his next step is to communicate this knowledge to partner in order to select the best bid for the *combined hands*. The difference between the right and the wrong bid is the difference between success and disaster. At all stages of bidding the principle of selection of the best bid is a paramount issue—and in war is comparable to strategical manœuvres for the best position. In Contract, most battles are won or lost before a single card is led, according to whether two hands are well or badly combined. As a result of the imperious necessity to play two hands harmoniously as one, there arose in the old days of Whist a beautiful intellectual language of cards by means of which partners could legitimately secure information from each other by drawing various inferences from the fall of cards. Most of this language of cards is embodied in Contract play in the form of leads, echoes, and other signals to show honours and distributions.¹

Similarly in Partnership Bidding there arises the necessity of a specialized language of bids, also based upon legitimate inferences to show honour and distributional values. In the advanced Culbertson System these inferences are based, not on arbitrary conventions, but on the inner logic of *bidding situations*. Because the bidding situations are different, and because at various stages partner bids something (direct

¹ Many of these leads and plays in current use are archaic survivals of Whist and Bridge, wholly unsuited to the requirements of modern Contract. The Culbertson System of Leads and Plays, embodying the latest research and experiences of master players, is to be published in the *Ready Guide to Leads and Plays* as well as in the writer's principal work on the subject, *Red Book of Leads and Plays*.

inferences) or fails to bid something (indirect inferences), a stock of valuable information is rapidly accumulated. In skilful minds this language of bids becomes a finely spun network of inferences thrown across the unknown, and uniting two partners who, at the start, are in the position of two allied armies with communications cut off.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LANGUAGE OF BIDS

The structure of the language of bids is quite simple. In order to combine twenty-six cards for the best bid, partners must, as a rule, exchange three kinds of information—on the *total number* of tricks in the hand, on the minimum number of honour- or *defensive* tricks and on *distribution*, favourable or unfavourable to the bid made, of suits and hands. These three basic inferences make up all the methods and conventions of bidding.

Inferences to show quantity, or the total of low-card and honour-tricks in the hand, are deduced by partner from the number of *times* the hand is bid or raised. Such inferences determine the limits of safety in partner's own bids.

Inferences to show quality, or the total of honour-tricks in the hand, are deduced from differences in bidding situations. The minimum honour-trick requirements for Opening bids of one or higher, Take-outs (Forcing and non-Forcing), Defensive Overcalls, Secondary bids and Doubles, enable partner to infer the degree of strength held.

Quality bidding is necessary in order to gauge accurately the defensive value of partnership hands *against* opponents' bids.

Inferences to show distribution (suit lengths) are conveyed by almost any bid, but more specifically with trump Rebids by the Opening Hand, and with Raises or Take-outs by partner. Even an Opening no-trump bid carries the indirect inference that the Opening Hand has no biddable suit.

These three currents of information are generally found in a single bid, with the emphasis laid on quality or distribution according to the special kind of bid made.

For instance, an Opening bid of one spade, when logically

decoded, tells partner, in a single bid, this intricate story:

- (a) the minimum number of playing or winning tricks held is between 3 and 4 (quantity); and
- (b) at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ tricks are in honours (quality); and
- (c) the minimum length is not less than four cards (distribution).

It tells much more through the silent language of indirect inferences, which are so called because their premise is not what partner actually does but what he fails to do. We can, for instance, infer indirectly from the above that the Opening Hand does not hold a very powerful hand or great trump length, as otherwise he would have made either an Opening two- or three-bid.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OPENING HAND

THE PLAYER who opens the bidding is the Opening Hand, and the first bid is called the Opening (original) bid. All Opening bids except Pre-emptive game-bids guarantee a definite minimum of defensive strength (usually $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks); lacking this minimum, a player should not open the bidding, no matter what he holds.

A player should pass originally with No. 1, but he must, as a rule, open with No. 2 (below):

1. ♠ QJ 10 9 ♥ 5 ♦ 7 4 ♣ K J 9 4 3 2
2. ♠ 7 3 2 ♥ 8 6 4 ♦ A J 8 ♣ A Q J 2

Yet, if both these hands are played with clubs as trumps the first will probably make more tricks than the second.

The point is that when a player opens the bidding, and thus fires the first gun of the battle, he must remember that the string of small trumps which are of great value at his own trump bid become worthless against the opponents' bids, or even in support of some other bid made by partner. The only tricks that are the quick cash assets against opponents and in support of partner's bids, are the honour or defensive tricks. An Opening bid is a leap in the dark, and honour-tricks are liquid values. If partner can expect a minimum number of them, even as few as $2\frac{1}{2}$, from the Opening bidder, he is then in the position to gauge how far the opponents can go in their bidding. If the opponents undertake a four-spade contract, and partner's Opening bid tells that he can take at least 2 tricks, while in your own hand you hold 3 tricks against the spade bid, it is obvious that the opponents have contracted for 2 tricks they cannot take. But if partner's Opening bid shows no definite minimum of honour or defensive values, you can never gauge the limit of the opponents' overbidding, nor can you ever be reasonably certain of finding in partner's hand one or more definite

entries that may be indispensable if you are to make a bid of your own.

Of equal, if not greater importance, are the *distributional* or low-card values, and information on distribution (suit lengths) exchanged between partners for the selection of the best bid. This information is conveyed by giving a definite minimum length and strength for biddable and rebiddable suits, and by a system of trump supports and denials. Again, the fact that a player enters the bidding after *passing originally* carries an inference that, although his hand is not strong in honour or defensive tricks, it has sufficient length values to justify the *Secondary Bid*. In this manner almost every bid made opens up a double view of the hand. It delineates the *quality* of the tricks in the hand and at the same time announces the number or the *quantity* of tricks held.

The range of the pass as Dealer is as follows:

1. *Honour-tricks*—from zero (a rare minimum) to 2, occasionally overlapping to $2\frac{1}{2}$ (maximum). A player will, of course, bear in mind that, for reasons of surprise strategy or with certain freaks, even 3 honour-tricks may be passed occasionally. To pass stronger hands would risk too much losing a game, and is to be expected only from erratic players or over-enthusiastic theorists.

2. *Distribution*—any conceivable suit length, including thirteen cards of the same suit.

The precise number of honour-tricks required as well as the minimum strength and length of the trump suit will vary widely according to whether the Opening bid is a bid of one, two, three or four.

OPENING SUIT BIDS OF ONE

Next to the pass, the Opening bid of one is the most important call in Contract. It is also the ideal bid. A biddable hand is very rare with which the best final bid is apparent from the start. As a rule, the hand offers a number of choices in conjunction with partner's, and a tremendous amount of information is required to discover the best choice. To exchange this information the partnership has

available only three or four rounds of bidding and is, in addition, hampered by the opponents. Hence the necessity *for economy of bids*, which, like a precious code language, *must be highly concentrated*. Hence, also, the Opening bidding range must be kept low with suit bids of one, and the Opening no-trump and higher bids, which lose a valuable round of code signalling and often shut out decisive information, must be avoided as much as possible. It is of the utmost importance to start right, just as in a horse race, for a wrong start will often cost the victory.

The scientific requirements for Opening suit bids of one in the Culbertson System are so delicately adjusted—to be fitted for expert play—that they offer the greatest defence compatible with safety, and as a matter of deliberate policy take into account the possibility of occasional loss. Since these requirements are the result of years of research and practical tests, the reader is urged to adhere to them—but not without imagination. Unfortunately many players, upon their own initiative, introduce radical variations in these requirements, not realizing that an arbitrary change, particularly upward, will surely lead to serious loss. The theory of Opening bids of one offers exceptional difficulties because the very occasional losses due to light, though sound, Opening bids are glaring on the score pad, while the considerable gains accruing from the tactics of aggressive defence are generally invisible. One cannot become a winning player unless one has learned Defensive Bidding, and of all Defensive bids an Opening suit one-bid is the best.

In view of the great importance of the Opening one-bid and a number of fallacious ideas now current, the general and specific requirements in the Culbertson System are here stated in greater detail than ever before. These requirements are not changed. They are simply made more comprehensive, and exceptions to the rule are brought out in greater relief. The fact that $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks approximate a hand which is a Queen better than each player's average share of an Ace, a King, a Queen and a Knave, gives us a line of demarcation (as to honours) between an Opening bid

and an original pass. The minimum requirements for biddable suits (see pages 75-76) restrict the choice of a trump suit. The honour-tricks required outside the trump suit vary according to the number of defensive honour-tricks in the trump suit itself. If your suit is ♠ A Q 4 3 2, you will require outside 1 honour-trick to make up the total of $2\frac{1}{2}$; and if the suit is ♠ Q J 10 3 2, you will require outside 2 honour-tricks. Finally, position, vulnerability and psychology must be considered and requirements shaded accordingly.

Opening trump bids of one show: ¹

Minimum honour strength in the hand: At least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks distributed in *two suits*.

Minimum length in the suit: Four cards.

Minimum honour strength in the suit:

1. If the Opening bid of one is made on a *four-card suit* it must ordinarily be headed by $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, as A Q 3 2, A J 10 2 or K Q J 2.

Outside Honour Strength: First and Second Hand, 1 honour-trick; Third and Fourth Hand, $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

When a four-card suit drops to nothing, as with A Q 3 2, the First or Second Hand requires not 1 but $1+$ in outside honour strength giving the total of $2\frac{1}{2}+$ honour-tricks. With strong four-card suits such as A K J 2, A Q J 2 or K Q J 2, the minimum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the hand suffices. Practically the same considerations apply when vulnerable.

Shaded four-card suits: In order to limit further the inherent disadvantage of the Opening no-trump, the following suits should be regarded as biddable: A J 9 2, K Q 3 2 or Q J 10 2 in either majors or minors, and in addition K J 3 2 in minor suits. These shaded suits have been found to be quite safe with a partner who is not wholly unimaginative, but, of course, a shaded biddable suit should not be bid

¹ The slight difference between the vulnerable and not-vulnerable situations lies in the added playing-trick strength or an extra $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick for reasons of safety.

when the hand itself is a minimum. The weakness of the shaded suit should be safeguarded by some added value above the minimum biddable strength of the hand: in all about 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour tricks.

A shaded suit should always be bid in exactly the same manner as a regulation suit except with a beginner or an erratic partner.

The entire theory of bidding a shaded suit is based on the fact that a suit bid is, in general, preferable to a no-trump, and that two four-card lengths of the same suit in combined hands will frequently give good results even with lowered honour strength. Four-card shaded suits should be bid in preference to no-trump, even when as weak as A 10 3 2 or QJ 3 2 in *minors*, particularly when a side is vulnerable and lacks 4 honour-tricks or when the distribution is 4-4-4-1. A note of warning must be sounded. The above shaded suits *are absolute bedrock minimums*, and to shade them even further, as is done by some over-enthusiastic players, would be not only unsound but would defeat its very purpose. Suits, *especially majors*, such as A 10 3 2, QJ 3 2 and K 10 3 2, should be bid only when it is quite clear to partner that the suit so bid is even weaker than a shaded suit.

2. If the Opening suit bid of one is made on a *five-card suit*, it can be headed by only $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick, as K 8 7 6 2 or QJ 5 4 3.

Outside honour strength: First and Second Hand, 2 honour-tricks; Third and Fourth Hand, 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, depending on playing-trick strength of the suit. A bedrock minimum should be passed even not-vulnerable, such as either of the following:

♠ K J 8 6 3 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ A Q 4 ♣ 10 4
 ♠ 8 3 ♥ 7 5 4 ♦ K 9 6 3 2 ♣ A K 8

Shaded five-card suits: Occasionally a five-card suit as weak as Q 10 4 3 2, J 10 4 3 2 or even less may be bid, especially to avoid opening the bidding with one no-trump. When a shaded suit is bid, the hand must be slightly supplemented with strength elsewhere to compensate for a suit weaker

than the established minimum honour-strength, approximating in all from 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

3. *If a six-card suit is bid, it can be headed by any card, as* ♠ 10 9 6 5 4 3.

Outside honour strength: First and Second Hand, $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks; Third and Fourth Hand, $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 honour-tricks, depending on the strength of the suit.

These minimum biddable trump suits are safe because of the iron-clad rule that partner cannot raise the Opening Hand's suit one-bid *without at least Q 3 2 or four low cards of the bid suit*. Partner may raise on less than this minimum only when the Opening bidder shows additional strength and length in the bid suit by *voluntarily* rebidding it.

Sound Opening one spade bids:

First or Second Hand, not-vulnerable—

1. ♠ A Q 10 2 ♥ J 6 5 ♦ A 10 8 7 ♣ 9 4

Any position, vulnerable or not vulnerable—

2. ♠ A K 10 6 5 4 ♥ K 3 ♦ Q 2 ♣ 8 6 2
3. ♠ K J 10 4 3 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ Q 9 ♣ K 8 4

Unsound Opening one-bids:

1. ♠ A K 10 9 8 ♥ 9 8 5 ♦ 10 7 4 ♣ 5 3
2. ♠ A 10 6 5 3 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ 8 4
3. ♠ K J 7 6 5 ♥ 10 4 2 ♦ A 10 3 ♣ 10 3

Suicidal Opening one-bids:

1. ♠ K 10 9 8 7 6 ♥ Q J 8 5 4 ♦ 10 ♣ 3
2. ♠ Q J 10 9 8 7 6 ♥ K 3 2 ♦ 5 4 ♣ 7

SHADING THE OPENING ONE-BID

The requirement of $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks is *flexible* in the sense that it is slightly shaded upward or even downward from a 'plus' value to $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick. The revision of the 'tariff' is based on four principal considerations which should be studied in more detail. These are psychology, vulnerability, playing strength and position.¹

¹ Other considerations, such as the part-score, will influence the Opening bid, but they are relatively of minor importance.

THE FACTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

Even with nearly perfect requirements for an Opening bid there is *the all-important factor of psychology or the personal equation*. The honour requirements for Opening bids should be shaded somewhat, upward or downward, according to the psychology and skill of partner and opponents. The following hand is not an Opening spade bid:

♠ A K 7 6 5 4 ♥ 9 8 3 2 ♦ 8 4 ♣ 5

With perhaps only 1 defensive trick, it should be passed except with a very timid partner who will not be misled into contracting for a losing slam.

Against the combination of frightened opponents and nonentity for a partner the following type of 'minnie' Opening bid is also devastating. It has $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks but is so emasculated as to border on the semi-psychic:

♠ A K 5 4 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ 5 4 3

Opponents may be bluffed out of the game or part-score, but there is no risk that a timorous partner will run amuck. In such cases one must throw a bombshell into the enemy's ranks even if it be charged mainly with smoke and sawdust. To open one diamond not vulnerable is good defence with:

♠ 10 8 ♥ 10 8 6 4 ♦ A J 10 8 ♣ K J 9

The hand has sufficient elements to protect partner if he is strong enough to force to a game; in addition, a valuable lead has been shown if the strength is concentrated in the opponents' hands.

Another type of *defensive* Opening one-bid to be used occasionally (except Fourth Hand) is:

♠ 9 4 ♥ K 9 2 ♦ A Q J 7 2 ♣ J 8 3

Since partner is educated to expect not much more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, no serious harm can come from bidding one diamond on this hand if partner is unusually strong; but if partner is weak, the opponents may be successfully confused and blocked. These Opening 'shaded' bids which are *slightly* below the regular requirements are really defensive

bids on the theory that attack is the best defence. They are of the nature of safe, semi-psychic bids.

In order to protect the Opening bidder, who may open on a 'minnie', the One Over One Response, the Jump two no-trump response and the Jump Raise are *not* unconditionally Forcing in the Culbertson System. While the Opening bidder must keep the bidding open if he has made the regulation Opening bid, he may drop the bidding if he has made a shaded Opening bid. For this reason only the Culbertson System enables a player to benefit from an occasional shaded or semi-psychic Opening bid with almost no risk.

Most players fail to realize the tremendous importance of *defensive* bidding in Bridge. A master player's first thought in Bridge is the same as that of a skilful commander of troops—that is, *defence*. The first job of the troops is to dig a series of trenches and to post sentinels, at the same time surrounding the army with a far-flung network of cavalry feelers. Similarly, before planning to make a game, a Bridge player thinks first of saving a game, and, before he attempts to score at his own bids, plans first to make it hard for the enemy to get together. Take care of the losses and the winnings will take care of themselves!

The aggressive defence by means of 'shaded' Opening bids must be psychologically balanced by occasionally passing with good (but not too good) hands. The best bid in Bridge loses much of its value if its meaning is made too constant and its reading consequently too easy for the opponents. It has always been the aim in the Culbertson System to render every bid simple and clear to partner, basing it on scientific safety devices; at the same time and in order to make it uncertain and difficult for the opponents, the bid is protected by a screen of psychological devices. The same technique obtains with Opening bids.

WHEN AN OPENING BID MAY BE PASSED

To pass when able to open will misinform partner as much as to open without at least shaded justifiable honour values. Partner may easily make a sacrifice bid to save the

game score, taking a loss of 2 or even 3 tricks, all the while ignoring the possibility that his partner passed an Opening bid with sufficient defence values to defeat the opponents' contract. Passing an Opening bid is justified for two reasons, as follows:

1. For reasons of general strategy any method of bidding, however sound, must be varied occasionally in order to surprise opponents and make the reading of bids more difficult to them.

For instance, the following hand is a borderline Opening bid and no serious harm can result from passing it occasionally:

♠ K J 9 7 5 ♥ J 9 6 3 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ 4

At the same time the distribution of the hand affords a fair chance of trapping opponents if partner shows strength and they bid majors.

2. An occasional pass in order to mislead opponents is very good strategy with a freak.

The following hand does contain $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, but it looks mangy and can be passed originally:

♠ 4 ♥ 7 5 ♦ A K 8 6 5 2 ♣ Q J 9 8

With another type of freak, such as

♠ — ♥ A K 9 7 6 5 3 2 ♦ Q J 10 3 ♣ 5

you have three choices—to pass, to bid four hearts or, perhaps the more subtle choice, to bid one heart. If you choose to pass there is little danger that neither partner nor opponents will bid and the hand be passed out.

Against players whose Fourth Hand Opening bids are so weak that they may be properly termed 'psychic Fourth Hand bids', the Third Hand can afford to lay a trap by passing even with $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. Similarly a strong pass by the Second Hand—in order to lay a trap for the Third Hand player who abuses the use of strategic Third Hand bids (see page 110)—is also advisable.

In all situations that justify passing an Opening bid, particular care should be taken not to pass on the balanced

type of hands containing 3+ or more honour-tricks. To pass 'for a swing' with

♠ A K 7 4 ♥ 7 4 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ K J 9 5

is the height of guileless optimism. For a naive hope of trapping the opponents a likely game is being sacrificed. Such tactics are popular with certain players (or rather writers) and represent a revival of the innocent early age of Bridge when a bidding system was not based on a precise reconstruction of partnership values, but on the perplexed frowns of the opponents. For fear that partner may have passed a game, the Fourth Hand is forced to open with a weak holding, usually with disastrous results. To open weak when last to speak, in order to 'protect' the First Hand, is as absurd and as dangerous as for a murderer to loiter on the scene of his crime.

VULNERABILITY—PLAYING STRENGTH—POSITION

The factor of playing strength is largely bound up with vulnerability. The only difference between a vulnerable and a non-vulnerable Opening bid of one is the added safety required. But because when there is a trump suit a trick or two can usually be picked up with low trumps, the difference between vulnerable and non-vulnerable requirements is slight. Practically all hands containing 2½ honour-tricks are good vulnerable risks provided the four- or five-card suit has some slight added playing strength to provide against the possibility of a loss of more than 2 tricks if partner is weak and the one-bid is left in. *Shaded* not-vulnerable Opening bids should be avoided, and as a general principle vulnerable bids need an added ½ honour-trick, or a trump suit above a minimum.

An Opening suit bid of one is justified *even with 2 honour-tricks*, not vulnerable, regardless of position, if you have strength in both major suits, as in the following justifiable Opening one-spade bid:

♠ K 10 9 3 2 ♥ Q J 8 7 ♦ A 6 5 ♣ 4

The general 2½ honour-trick requirement should also be shaded slightly upward or downward according to whether

the player opens in the position of Dealer or, after the Dealer has passed, in the position of Second, Third or Fourth Hand.

The regulation requirements and shadings given for vulnerable and not-vulnerable bids apply equally to all four positions of the Opening bidder, except:

1. When in the position of First or Second Hand, a five-card or longer major or minor suit, when headed by *all three* top honours (A K Q), may be opened without any outside strength. However, a pass is optional.¹

2. When in the position of Third Hand, a *strategic* bid may be made on a hand containing but 2 honour-tricks, and sometimes even $1\frac{1}{2}$ + honour-tricks, provided the trump suit is of fair strength and a lead in that suit against the left-hand opponent's possible no-trump is desired.

Examples (not vulnerable):

♠ 6 3 ♥ K 8 6 ♦ A Q J 8 3 ♣ 9 7 4
 ♠ 8 4 ♥ K J 10 8 5 4 ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ K 8

These Third Hand strategic bids are in reality anticipated defensive bids, and the total playing-trick strength requirement, vulnerable and not-vulnerable, follows the Rule of Two and Three (see page 218). The strategic bid is effective in throwing a monkey wrench into the Fourth Hand's machinery, which, as a rule, will be a hand of better than average strength. Obviously, partner of the Third Hand should step lightly with his subsequent bids until he can definitely ascertain from the Third Hand's Rebids whether his is a bona fide or a purely strategic bid. This bid should naturally be varied with occasional passes, and, if the playing-trick strength of the suit warrants it, with bids of three or higher, which are even more effective.

3. The difference between the First and Fourth Hand bid is about the same as between a vulnerable and not-vulnerable bid. The following should not be bid Fourth Hand:

♠ 6 3 ♥ A K 8 6 4 ♦ K 7 5 ♣ 7 4 3

¹ In the position of Third Hand with a suit such as A K Q 3 2 and no outside strength, it is a better policy to pass, hoping for an eventual no-trump contract at one's right.

distribution of the Opening Hand and thus permit partner to choose safely the best trump suit for the combined hands. To illustrate:

1. ♠ K J 8 5 4 ♥ 8 5 ♦ A K J 10 8 ♣ 7

The proper bid is one spade. Partner will then assume at least equal lengths if both suits are eventually bid. However, add ♦ 7 in lieu of ♥ 8 and the proper bid would be *one diamond*.

2. ♠ A K J 10 ♥ K 5 ♦ K J 10 5 4 ♣ 8 6

The proper Opening call is one diamond. Distribution takes precedence over honours. When spades are bid on the second round, partner should be warned that the suit has probably but four cards or, if of five-card length, is weak in honours. However, the hand contains 3½ honour-tricks and some plus values: strong enough so that both suits may safely be shown. Partner cannot raise spades without adequate support.

3. ♠ 4 3 ♥ A K Q 5 ♦ K 10 7 5 4 ♣ 8 6

The correct Opening bid is one heart, not one diamond. The hand itself is a minimum, and if partner responds with a no-trump Take-out, it will be difficult, and perhaps dangerous, to bid two hearts, for this would require partner to bid three diamonds as a preference if he holds equal or greater length in that suit. With such a hand, three diamonds might well be a losing contract. It will thus be seen that suits should not be bid in the reverse order of their rank unless the holder is prepared to play in the first suit at a contract *1 trick higher* than the second. On hands of the type shown in the example above, the correct Opening bid is one heart, so that if partner responds with one no-trump, two diamonds may then be bid and partner may show his preference without increasing the contract. *This modification of the general principles applies only to hands of minimum strength.*¹

¹ The situation is somewhat different when overcalling an *opponent's Opening bid of one*. Here a saving of the extra round of bidding is often important, and the player therefore should manipulate his bids on two-suiters in such a manner as to offer a preference to partner without increasing the contract.

4. ♠ A J 10 3 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A K J 10 7 6 ♣ 7

Here diamonds are bid *twice*, if feasible, and then are followed up by spades. Partner will read a 6-4 distribution and revert to diamonds even with two low spades and a singleton diamond. With a 7-4 distribution the four-card suit should not be mentioned unless the seven-card suit has been bid at least *three times*.

5. ♠ A Q J 7 3 ♥ A J 10 8 5 4 ♦ 7 ♣ 8

The proper bid is one heart. The disadvantages of temporarily indicating to partner a four-card rather than a five-card spade suit are more than counterbalanced by the necessity of being assured that, with a freak of this type, the combined hands will play at the *longest* trump holding.

Often a player can cleverly show a five-card major even when he bids a minor first, thus:

SOUTH

1 ♣
1 ♠
3 ♠ !

NORTH

1 ♥
2 N T

South deliberately shuts out a preference by not bidding three clubs—clearly showing he really prefers spades and has therefore a five-card suit.

THE APPROACH PRINCIPLE

The Approach principle applies when there is a choice between a suit and a no-trump bid, as follows:

*Whenever a hand contains a biddable suit (be it even a shaded four-card minor) the suit should, as a rule, be preferred to no-trump in opening the bidding, and, usually, in responding to an Opening bid.*¹

The Approach principle applies in both the Opening and the Responding Hands, even with a singleton or an unprotected two- or three-card suit. Failure to apply the Approach principle causes large losses even with advanced players.

¹ See exceptions on page 119d.

With suit bids higher than one or with Opening no-trump bids of one, the bidding rapidly becomes crowded, so that much valuable partnership information is usually shut out. For this reason the best Opening bid in Contract is a one-bid or response in a suit; higher bids are resorted to only when the trump suit is practically solid (here the hand should be bid pre-emptively); or the hand is so powerful that a one-bid may easily be passed by partner (here an Opening two-bid in a suit is advisable). The same Approach (One Over One) principle applies when responding to Opening suit bids of one.

The Responding Hand should not only prefer a suit response (be it even a four-card shaded biddable suit), but whenever possible he should endeavour to keep his responses within the range of one-bids.

A Jump suit response (Forcing Take-out) should be made only with hands of great strength containing a minimum of $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.¹

As a matter of fact, more than 90 per cent of all Opening bids in Contract are one-bids in a suit, based on from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $5+$ honour-tricks.

The success of the Approach principle² depends upon the use of the *negative* one no-trump response, which gives the Opening Hand another opportunity to bid. Only a very weak hand, containing less than an Ace plus a Queen or no fit for partner's suit, justifies a pass by partner. With any other holding he must *take out* in a new suit, *raise* or *bid* a negative no-trump.

¹ See Chapter XIII on 'The One Over One'.

² The Approach principle is a logical chain of bidding methods of which modern four-card suit bids are but a part. In adopting the rule eliminating trump Raises on less than Q 3 2 and in giving decided preference to Opening suit bids (however weak) rather than no-trump, the underlying thought is to increase the number of possible game bids and at the same time make such bidding safe. Originated and named by the author, the Approach principle has in many respects revolutionized Auction and Contract bidding and forms the basis of his Approach System of Auction, later being incorporated in his Approach-Forcing System of Contract.

By the application of the Approach or 'suit first—no-trump last' method, the bidding and playing range was considerably increased by innumerable hands which make game (or save points) at some four-card suit bid, for instance, but not at no-trump. And in order not to diminish the range of hands which make game at no-trump and fail at suit bids, we make use of the 'negative' one no-trump, the object being to keep the bidding open at a low stage in the event of partner's preferring a no-trump or having still another bid to offer. Thus bidding to show distribution has largely replaced showing 'quick-trick' values only.

THE FALLACY OF 'NO-TRUMP COMES FIRST'

The Approach principle broke up the petrified crust of Auction and Contract methods which, though based on wrong fundamentals, were (and still are) widely used by players and writers who apparently fail to realize that Contract is a far more subtle game than a mere series of bull rushes with 'smashing' no-trumps. For the past twenty-five years, various writers have argued the advantage of having the first lead come 'up to' a hand with strong tenaces, and they have repeatedly abandoned it. The fact is that most tenace combinations are not confined to the Declarer's own hand but *continue* into the Dummy's hand as well. It is entirely a matter of the *position* (right or left) of the outstanding higher honours.

For instance, if the Declarer holds K J x of a suit, a lead on his left from Q x x x x is a distinct disadvantage if partner of the leader holds A x. In fact, with many tenace positions it is far more advantageous to conceal the Queens, the Knaves and the Tens in the weaker hand and have opponents lead up to them and *through* tenace combinations.

Hands do occur in which the leader's position is an important consideration, but to erect such an incidental occurrence into a system of bidding may cost a gullible player a million points.

The principal disadvantages of a strong Opening one no-trump are the following:

1. It shuts out games or Slams at suit bids which are not so likely to be made after an Opening no-trump bid by either partner. *With a strong hand* it is all to the Declarer's advantage to start the bidding low and thus not only obtain the maximum of information from partner but also ferret out adverse suit lengths by actually *encouraging* the opponents to bid so that they will either be heavily penalized or at least will disclose the distribution and the location of key honour cards.

2. It loses the first and most valuable round of bidding. Responses to an Opening suit bid of one, especially in a lower ranking suit, can be kept within the range of one-bids; but after an Opening one no-trump the bidding rises rapidly, and any adverse Overcall will badly blur partnership inferences.

3. When it ignores a major or a minor suit length, it fails to convey to partner the *distributional picture* of the hand which greatly facilitates Plastic Valuation.

4. By unnecessarily advertising considerable strength, it warns the opponents and invites them not to commit suicide. Penalties—the expert's principal asset—become sparse.

The following example best illustrates the advantages which accrue from an Approach bid in preference to an Opening no-trump. An Opening one spade bid always results in the best final contract, but with various conceivable Dummies an Opening no-trump bid may prove disastrous.

The Opening Hand:

♠ A Q 6 5 ♥ K J 10 ♦ K 6 5 4 ♣ A 10

Possible Dummy No. 1:

♠ K 8 4 2 ♥ A Q ♦ Q J 7 3 ♣ 6 5 4

The response to one spade is three spades, leading to an

ultimate four spade contract which can be made. To one no-trump, vulnerable, the response would be three no-trump. If one adversary holds five clubs three no-trump is impossible, since $\spadesuit A$ is a sure re-entry to cash the setting club tricks.

Possible Dummy No. 2:

$\spadesuit J 9 7 4$ $\heartsuit 8 4 3 2$ $\diamondsuit 10 8 7 3$ $\clubsuit 6$

An Opening one no-trump bid would be passed and defeated. Two spades can probably be made on the hand.

Possible Dummy No. 3:

$\spadesuit K 9 4$ $\heartsuit Q 6$ $\diamondsuit A J 7 3$ $\clubsuit 9 7 5 2$

The response to one spade is two spades; the Opening Hand will rebid at two no-trump, and the Responding Hand raise to three, so that the result is the same as though the Opening bid had been one no-trump.

Possible Dummy No. 4:

$\spadesuit 7 3 2$ $\heartsuit A 6 4$ $\diamondsuit Q J 7$ $\clubsuit K 4 3 2$

Regardless of the Opening bid, the hands will arrive at the correct contract of three no-trump.

It is obvious that employment of the Approach Principle leads to a *choice* of final contracts, when to open with no-trump necessitates arriving blindly at a somewhat speculative no-trump contract.

THE THEORY OF LIMIT BIDS

Because every bid that a player can make is based upon specific minimum and maximum requirements in honour-tricks and playing strength, it becomes obvious that the range of values indicated by any bid must come within these well-defined limits. Every bid is, therefore, to some extent a *limit bid*. With the Opening one-bid, which may range from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to more than 5 honour-tricks, and with the single Raise to a trump bid of one, which may range from

the shaded minimum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks to the maximum of $4\frac{1}{2}$, it is not immediately possible to ascertain the strength implied, but in most other situations each player usually can judge the limit of his partner's general strength the minute his partner speaks.

There is no bid which it is more important to limit than the Opening no-trump bid of one, because the Responding Hand must know at all times the exact number of bare honour-tricks which will justify a Raise. If the limit of the one no-trump Opening bid is not clearly established, the bidder's partner will be wholly at a loss holding:

♠ A 3 2 ♥ K 7 4 3 ♦ Q 7 5 ♣ 10 8 4

If his partner's Opening no-trump is strong, a game should be possible; if it is weak, a major set might be taken even at two no-trump. The no-trump, as a limit bid, eliminates all such uncertainties, and partner's duty is always clear.

OPENING NO-TRUMP BIDS OF ONE

Lacking a biddable suit, a player should bid one no-trump with about 3 honour-tricks not-vulnerable (or 4 if vulnerable) in three or more suits.¹

The honour-trick holding which will justify an Opening bid of one no-trump when not-vulnerable may possibly range from $2\frac{1}{2}$, if the hand includes one or more plus values and some intermediate strength in tens and nines, to 4 bare honour-tricks with little or no intermediate support, such as

♠ A 9 8 3 ♥ Q J 8 ♦ K 10 9 ♣ Q J 7 ($2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks)

♠ A K 3 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ 8 6 5 2 ♣ K J 8 (4 honour-tricks)

Since any Opening one no-trump bid denies a biddable

¹ Occasionally more than 3 honour-tricks in two suits must be bid at one no-trump, as either of the following:

♠ A K 7 ♥ A K 4 ♦ 9 7 5 3 ♣ 8 6 3
 A K 7 ♥ 1 6 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ A 5

suit in the hand (except as in the rare situations noted on page 119d), it follows that the distribution indicated is always 4-3-3-3, as in the above examples, or occasionally 4-4-3-2. With 4-4-4-1 distribution any non-biddable four-card suit is preferable to one no-trump, and when the hand contains any five-card suit and no other biddable suit, the five-card suit should be preferred to a one no-trump opening, *regardless of the rank of the card heading it*.

THE NO-TRUMP AS A LIMIT BID

A close perusal of the two hands given above will reveal that, while they differ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, *their trick-taking power is almost identical*. This is true of any two hands which may be bid at one no-trump, owing to the restrictions placed on Opening no-trump bids, because:

1. Since a no-trump hand contains no biddable suit, in practically no instance will it give any promise of developing more than 1 long suit trick.
2. The range of honour-trick strength reaches its highest point at 4 bare honour-tricks, which are ordinarily worth only 4 playing-tricks, and its lowest point at $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks reinforced by intermediate cards which will ordinarily develop at least 1 additional winning trick.
3. A hand containing more than 4 honour-tricks will almost always contain a biddable suit, or justify a bid of two no-trump.

Analysis therefore shows that an Opening bid of one no-trump indicates a hand which, solely on its own strength, will take between $3\frac{1}{2}$ and $4\frac{1}{2}$ tricks at a no-trump contract; and from this truth we deduce the conception of the Opening one no-trump as a *limit bid*.

Nor can the vulnerability feature affect the truth of the statement that any one no-trump bid is highly limited in scope. Inasmuch as the vulnerable one no-trump guarantees 4 honour-tricks, as against the 3 honour-tricks shown by the not vulnerable one no-trump, its range of playing-trick values will be approximately 1 trick higher.

The statement that one no-trump bids show limited strength is not based upon a desire to set an arbitrary restriction on such bids, but upon the profound truth that sound bidding which follows the Approach Principle necessarily requires that all but a certain few hands should be opened with one of a suit, and that all other hands biddable at one are approximately alike in general strength. It follows that the Responding Hand must always take into consideration the fact that when his partner bid one no-trump he in all likelihood showed the full strength of his hand, and that, even in an extreme case, the Opening no-trump bidder will have at most one Rebid, if that. Hence the Responding Hand may make a Forcing Take-out of a not vulnerable no-trump bid with only 3 honour-tricks (instead of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks required for a Forcing Take-out of a suit bid), and sometimes with as few as $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks if the distribution of the hand is such that game is almost assured, even though partner's one no-trump be a minimum. Since a game seems assured and yet partner's Opening no-trump may have no Rebid, you should take out with three spades on:

♠ QJ 10 8 3 ♥ K 6 5 ♦ A Q 7 4 ♣ 7

Make a Forcing Take-out of a vulnerable Opening one no-trump with a strong biddable suit and $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, shading these requirements with such a hand as:

♠ K Q 9 7 5 4 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A J 6 4 ♣ 10

FORCING IN AN UNBIDDABLE SUIT

The fact that partner has opened the bidding with one no-trump is by no means a reason for relinquishing hope of game in a major suit simply because the Responding Hand holds no five-card major. Very often the Opening Hand will be found to contain an unbiddable four-card major suit which, when supported by four of that suit in the Responding Hand, will offer the best chance for game.

Particularly when the Responding Hand has four cards in both spades and hearts, he should make every effort to determine the possibilities of a game contract in one of them. Since it is unwise to make a Forcing Take-out of one no-trump in a four-card major (which may be raised although the Opening Bidder has only three, and thus meet disaster because of insufficient trump length), a way should be found to force the no-trump bidder to rebid in a major suit if he can.

This contingency is met by making a Forcing Take-out of partner's one no-trump Opening bid in an unbiddable (sometimes even a two- or three-card) minor suit. After such a Forcing Take-out the Opening Hand must respond in a major suit if he holds *any four cards* in that suit. If not, he bids three no-trump, and there the hand is played.

The Responding Hand must, of course, not make this Forcing Take-out unless the honour strength of his hand is such that a game is indicated. For example, with the following hand:

♠ A J 6 5 ♥ K Q J 6 ♦ K 4 3 ♣ 6 2

a game seems assured, but may not be possible in no-trump if the adversaries have a strong club suit and a sure entry. It seems that there will be a much better play in spades or hearts if the combined hands have eight of either of these suits. The proper response to one no-trump is, therefore, *three diamonds*, a Forcing bid. If the Opening Hand makes any response other than three in a major suit, he absolutely denies a four-card major.

This type of Forcing Take-out may be employed with five cards of one major and four of the other, or occasionally with only one four-card major suit when three no-trump will be safe if partner responds with three of the other major. Its use in no way interferes with the correct bidding of a hand which contains a minor suit on which it is desirable to make a Forcing Take-out. A strong minor suit in the Responding Hand does not alter the fact that the final contract will still

be no-trump. When, in uncommon situations, it seems proper to play at five of a minor suit, the bidding could proceed as follows:

Opening Hand

1 N T

3 ♠

Responding Hand

3 ♦

4 ♦!

The four diamond bid shows that the Forcing Take-out was based on a long diamond suit and a desire to play at that suit. The no-trump bidder can now bid *five diamonds*, or, if his hand justifies a Slam try, *four no-trump* (see page 274).

Ordinarily, however, the entire burden of bidding a Slam will be in the Responding Hand; do not forget that the Opening no-trump bid was *limited*, and can seldom contain enough added values to take any initiative in the bidding after a game contract has been reached. For this reason, the responses which suggest a Slam must be based upon strength in the Responding Hand alone, relying on the no-trump bid only for basic values.

The Slam inference is readily effected in the foregoing example, by bidding five diamonds instead of four diamonds, since the Forcing Take-out required that the bidding be kept open to game anyway. The Responding Hand can also make use of the four and five no-trump bids in this position. Since a suit has been bid by one member of the partnership, these are not considered in the light of direct Raises, but assume their conventional meanings (see page 274). The original bidder having added values in honour-tricks (as 4 instead of only 3 when not vulnerable) may now encourage or bid the Slam.

REGULATION SUIT TAKE-OUTS OF ONE NO-TRUMP

The Responding Hand can usually tell, since the strength shown by his partner's Opening one no-trump is limited, whether the combined hands offer a chance for game. If game seems unlikely, the Responding Hand should usually pass; however, the unbalanced distribution makes it advis-

able to play at a suit contract of two- or three-odd, whereas the no-trump contract could be obtained at one-odd.

The Responding Hand may then make a Simple Take-out of his partner's one no-trump, regardless of his weakness in honour-tricks. For example, one no-trump might be set 3 tricks with

♠ 6 ♥ 8 3 ♦ J 10 8 7 6 4 2 ♣ 9 5 3

whereas as many as 9 tricks might be taken with diamonds as trumps. On such a hand a two diamond response may be made to one no-trump. If partner bids two no-trump, a bid of three diamonds is now an effective Sign-off (see page 203).

REBIDS BY THE OPENING NO-TRUMP BIDDER

The Opening no-trump bidder may rebid once in no-trump for any additional $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick; he may raise his partner's Take-out with an additional playing-trick, whether it be honour strength, or trump length and a ruffing-trick. A Rebid to two no-trump after partner has made a regulation Take-out may be based upon exceptional honour-trick strength in partner's suit, though the hand contains no actual added strength. With A K 2 or A Q 2 of partner's suit, for example, a Rebid to two no-trump is right since presumably the long cards of partner's suit can be easily established.

Since a regulation Take-out of a one no-trump bid may be based solely upon *inability to support a no-trump contract in any way*, the no-trump bidder should not show his full supporting value in that suit until the Responding Hand has had an opportunity to confirm any inference of strength which may have been implied in the first Take-out. This allows the Responding Hand to sign off at the range of three (by rebidding if the original bidder's Rebid is two no-trump, or by passing if the original bidder raises the suit bid to three).

WHEN AN OPENING NO-TRUMP BID IS ADVISABLE

There is no rule which does not have its exceptions.

Occasionally it is not only permissible but advisable to bid no-trump even with a biddable or a shaded biddable four-card suit, when the hand is distributed 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 and the biddable suit is a minor. Apart from the general strategic consideration of varying one's bidding so that it may not be an open book to the adversaries, there is another reason for bidding one no-trump not vulnerable occasionally, particularly on hands of intermediate strength, containing from 3+ to 4 bare honour-tricks. On such hands, if you bid one club or one diamond as an Opening bid and your partner responds with one no-trump, you are slightly under the strength needed to raise the no-trump contract to two in view of the indifferent distribution. But if you pass your partner's one no-trump Take-out you may well miss a game if partner has more than a minimum. In this situation bid no-trump originally, for if partner has 2+ honour-tricks (sufficient to raise to two no-trump), certainly you can bid three no-trump with confidence.

Assume, not vulnerable, such a holding as:

♠ A Q 4 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ K 10 6 ♣ K Q 9 3

If the Opening bid is one no-trump and partner responds with two no-trump, the hand is strong enough to bid for game, and if the response is two of a suit, the hand is strong enough to bid two no-trump with the hope that partner may bid three. But if the Opening bid is one club and partner responds with one no-trump, the Opening bidder is forced to pass as his hand is not quite good enough to bid two no-trump (strong game suggestion). It lacks another biddable suit, and the clubs are not rebiddable. After an Opening one club bid, this hand is slightly too strong to respond to a suit Take-out of one with one no-trump, but is not quite strong enough to respond with two no-trump.¹

¹ A biddable or shaded biddable *major* suit must always be preferred to an Opening no-trump bid, even though the hand pattern may be 4-3-3-3. Any tactical advantage which may at times favour the Opening no-trump bid is outweighed by the fact that reaching a major suit contract when each partner holds four of the

suit is usually impossible after an Opening no-trump bid. Remember that balanced distribution does not necessarily make a no-trump contract desirable, for such a distribution as 4-4-4-1 in partner's hand makes it practically imperative to arrive at the final contract in a suit.

CHAPTER IX

OPENING TWO- AND HIGHER BIDS

THE OPENING SUIT BID OF TWO (FORCING)

Hands containing 5 or fewer honour-tricks will not, as a rule, score game unless partner holds about 1 honour-trick in addition. Consequently, with hands containing 5 or fewer honour-tricks, a two-bid is a losing bid since, if partner holds about 1 honour-trick or adequate trumps, he will have some justifiable bid in response to any Opening *one*-bid, but, if partner holds *less* than 1 honour-trick, a two-bid, when made on 5 or less honour-tricks, forces a game response that will probably result in a loss. Most 5 honour-trick hands will fail unless buttressed by a solid trump suit or other favourable distribution. With hands which lack powerful trump suits, Opening one-bids, which are ideal Contract bids, will serve the same purpose, without the added disadvantage—inherent in all high bids—of pushing the bidding unnecessarily high and shutting out a wide range of partner's free responses. In the Approach-Forcing System a two-bid is a necessary evil to be tolerated only with extremely powerful hands, with which, if only a one-bid is made, the danger is very great that partner may hold less than the minimum required for a response to an Opening one-bid and pass out a likely game hand. The 'two-bid complex' is a widespread malady largely fostered by superficial players to whom a two-bid is, as they say, 'the backbone of the Forcing System'. It is not a backbone, but only a small fin.

At the same time there is no more scientific and thrilling bid than a two-bid properly made and responded to.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR FORCING TWO-BIDS

Minimum trump and honour-trick strength: 5 honour-tricks distributed in three suits, but only when the trump suit is

nearly solid. With freaks or long near-solid trump suits, $4\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in three suits may suffice. With distributions 5-3-3-2 and 4-4-3-2 at least $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and some playing-trick strength are required. With 4-3-3-3 distribution better than $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks are required. It follows that most 5 honour-trick hands should be bid as one and not as two; not all $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick hands are started with a two-bid; and only the rarest of freaks is started with a two-bid on hands containing $4\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks; finally, there are very rare hands that would justify a two-bid with but 4 honour-tricks in two suits—such as the following:

♠ A K Q 7 4 3 ♥ A K Q 9 5 3 ♦ 8 ♣ —

It must be remembered that the requirement of $4\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in three suits to justify a two-bid applies to real freaks—something that not only looks but *smells* like a freak, not the mere common or garden variety of distribution, such as a 5-5-2-1.

If the bid suit has four cards, it must be headed by at least A Q, A J 10 or K Q 10 ($1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks). Outside honour strength, 4-4 $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks or better in two suits.

If the bid suit has five cards, it must be headed by at least K or Q J ($\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick). Outside honour strength, 5 honour-tricks or better in two suits.

All Opening suit (not no-trump) two-bids are Forcing. That is, when there is no intervening bid by an opponent, an Opening suit bid of two unconditionally demands a bid from partner. Even though partner holds an absolute blank, he must make some bid. He has no choice: he must bid or die.

*Whatever the responses received, either partner must keep the bidding open until a game bid or a satisfactory penalty is reached.*¹ If it is one of the opponents who makes an intervening bid, and thus keeps the bidding open for the Opening Hand, the Responding Hand may pass, but in any subsequent round neither partner may allow the bidding to die below a game contract.

¹ See Two-Bids with a Part-Score.

To allow to either partner an *option* of passing is to defeat the very purpose of the two-bid.

Examples of Regulation Two-Bids with 5 or more Honour-Tricks

Bid two spades when holding:

♠ A Q 9 2 ♥ A Q J 4 ♦ K Q 10 2 ♣ A

Bid two diamonds when holding:

♠ 7 ♥ A K 10 3 ♦ A K Q 9 4 ♣ A Q 3

Bid two hearts when holding:

♠ — ♥ A K Q J 8 7 6 ♦ A Q 2 ♣ A J 10

Bid two spades *in spite of any advice to the contrary* with:

♠ A K 9 2 ♥ A K Q 4 ♦ A K J 4 ♣ 7

Examples of Two-Bids with Only 4½ Honour-Tricks

Bid two spades when holding:

♠ A K 10 8 7 4 ♥ A Q 10 7 5 4 ♦ A ♣ —

Bid two spades when holding:

♠ A K Q 8 7 5 4 ♥ — ♦ A K 4 ♣ Q J 8

Examples of Hands with 5 Honour-Tricks which are not Two-Bids because the Trump Suit is not strong enough

Bid *only one spade* when holding either of the following:

♠ A K 10 9 7 ♥ A K 10 2 ♦ A 5 ♣ 7 4

♠ A K 7 4 3 ♥ A 5 4 ♦ A 7 2 ♣ K Q

Many 5½ honour-trick hands, when distributed 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2, are bid at one. For example:

Bid one heart when holding:

♠ K 3 2 ♥ A Q 9 8 ♦ A K 4 ♣ A Q 7

Bid one spade (rather than two no-trump) when holding:

♠ A K 5 4 ♥ A J 9 ♦ A K 7 ♣ Q J 2¹

¹ This is a close question. Some players prefer two no-trump while others, including myself, incline toward the more informa-

Any Double after a two-bid is, of course, for penalties.

For responses to two-bids, see *The Responding Hand*.

The occasional slight loss suffered on two-bids with these maximum requirements is very largely compensated for by games and Slams which will be difficult to reach with other less precise or less practical variations of the Culbertson Forcing Two-Bid. A note of warning must be sounded, however. Two-bids cannot be 'shaded' with impunity.

A two-bid is packed with dynamite. I believe that a majority of players still mishandle this beautiful instrument of precision. Some launch into a two-bid on the slightest provocation, as though they were enjoying a subconscious pleasure in once more reviving the feeling of omnipotence of dim childhood by imposing their sovereign will upon a terrified partner (who willy-nilly must obey). As a rule, the two-bid complex finds its psychological roots in the subconscious contempt of almost any player for his unfortunate partner.

Most of us know the ominous feeling of impending disaster whenever we pick up a strong or unusual hand. The reason for such a feeling is to be found perhaps in the fact that a player suddenly realizes that, after all, his partner is only a moron. His dear partner may be qualified to handle average hands—like a bad driver on a wide, open road; but freaks and unusual situations will require handling by a player's own master mind. Hence, panicky attempts to make most extraordinary bids have as their object the reducing of partner to dead silence, thus preventing the poor fish from giving any information whatsoever. Inasmuch as each partner has a low opinion of the other the danger is doubled. As a matter of fact, it is especially with weak partners that the advantage of starting the bidding low, with suit bids of one, is the more evident. The lower the original bid, the

tive and at the same time *strength-concealing* one-bid in a suit. Perhaps the best solution in this as in many other hair-splitting questions would be to bid one way on Mondays and the other way on Tuesdays, etc.

more opportunity there will be to warn partner or forestall his possible errors of judgment. This is one of the main reasons why an Opening no-trump bid should be avoided. With strong hands, partner should be discouraged and opponents encouraged. Players seem to lose sight of the most essential precept in Bridge or in life: let nature take its course.

TWO-BIDS WITH A PART-SCORE

The new scoring requires a somewhat different treatment of the two-bid when it is made by a player whose side has a part-score.

With *any* part-score¹ (be it 40, 60 or 90) the Opening two-bid *is still a Forcing bid*, even though two odd is already a game contract, but with the following reservations:

1. The Responding Hand must bid (even with a totally blank hand) *at least once*.
2. The Responding Hand must bid once more (even with a totally blank hand, and even after a game has been reached) if the Opening Hand makes a *Jump Rebid*.
3. The Responding Hand need not bid again if the Opening Hand does not make a *Jump Rebid*.

To illustrate:

Part-score of 40

<i>The Opening Hand</i>	<i>The Responding Hand</i>
2 ♥ (Forcing)	2 N T (shows less than 1½ honour-tricks; may show a total blank)
4 ♦ (Forcing again) <i>but</i>	Must bid again
3 ♦	Need not bid again

The requirements for a Forcing two-bid to the score and responses are practically the same as for a regulation Forcing

¹ When the two-bid does not produce game, it is treated exactly like a two-bid with no score.

two-bid. With powerful two-suiters and freakish hands, these requirements may be shaded down to a minimum of 4 honour-tricks in two suits.

This is the most logical solution of the annoying problem which confronts a player who holds a powerful hand. He is assured that partner will respond at least once, and should he hold a very powerful hand he can force again. At the same time, the risk of losing a game by trying for a Slam is largely minimized.

It must be remembered that with a part-score the partner of the Opening bidder should be allowed a little more leeway in his response to an Opening bid of one. As little as 1 honour-trick and, with good distribution, even slightly less, would justify a response to a bid of one with a part-score. With so little needed to make a game, the hand should be strained almost to the breaking point although, of course, with nearly blank hands one should pass. The bid also has the additional advantage of not disclosing to the opponents the extremely meagre nature of the hand.

SHUT-OUT BIDS WITH A PART-SCORE

Since a two-bid to the part-score is Forcing, *any bid higher than a game contract is a Pre-emptive (shut-out) bid and not a Slam invitation.* The bid is also Pre-emptive when the opponents have a part-score. For instance, a bid of three spades with a part-score of 40 or 60 is a shut-out (Pre-emptive bid), and, as such, it is an attempt to prevent the opponents from exchanging information at lower bids. This important change is in accordance with the trend in the Culbertson System of 1933 to extend the field of Defensive overbids as much as possible in order better to combat the Approach principle. The minimum number of playing-tricks shown by any part-score overbid is the contract less about 1 trick when vulnerable, and the contract less about 2 tricks when not vulnerable.

OPENING TWO NO-TRUMP BIDS

Opening two no-trump bids are not Forcing, because no

choice between at least one suit and no-trump is offered. This writer's pet aversion is an Opening two no-trump bid. There is no bid in Contract which talks more loudly and says less.

An Opening two no-trump bid indicates a hand which contains seven winners at no-trump, with at least one stopper in every suit. Such stoppers must be as good as Q 10 x, K x or J 10 x x. The seven winners must be composed of honour-tricks, which may be given their full playing-trick value (see page 57) or of an established suit in which the small cards will surely win tricks at no-trump. The hand will usually contain about 5 honour-tricks, but may contain slightly less when the distribution is balanced, and a great deal less when a long, solid suit represents the major portion of the 7 playing-tricks. The following are examples of Opening two no-trump bids, regardless of vulnerability and position:

♠ K Q 10 ♥ A J 9 ♦ Q J 9 8 ♣ K Q J
 ♠ A K 6 ♥ Q J 6 ♦ A 10 9 8 ♣ K Q 10

The Responding Hand may raise to three no-trump with $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick and one plus value or more, or may take out in a biddable five- or six- card suit. The two no-trump bid with such hands permits a game contract to be reached in some cases in which the Responding Hand is too weak to make even a shaded Raise or Take-out of an Opening one-bid of a suit; but since these hands are very rare, a shaded suit bid of one in preference to an Opening two no-trump bid cannot be criticized.

When not vulnerable, the two no-trump bid may be considerably weaker in honour-tricks, and may be based upon a long, solid minor suit with one of the other suits only partially stopped. A two no-trump bid on such a hand is very effective as a shut-out, and can sometimes be used in the position of Third Hand even when vulnerable. For example, with the following hand:

♠ K 6 ♥ Q 10 4 ♦ A K Q J 5 3 ♣ Q 7

not-vulnerable, the bid is two no-trump. The hand will probably take a trick in spades or hearts if the adversaries lead one of those suits, while the club suit is stopped if Dummy holds as much as J x x or 10 x x x x. The hand should therefore develop a minimum of seven tricks even though partner has no strength whatsoever, and if he holds the minimum of $\frac{1}{2}+$ honour-trick and raises to three no-trump, there is a very fine chance of developing the eighth and ninth tricks.

OPENING THREE NO-TRUMP BIDS

An Opening three no-trump bid is made on a hand with at least 8 sure tricks in honours, with all suits stopped and, usually, no biddable suit. For example:

♠ A 7 4 2 ♥ A K Q ♦ A K 4 ♣ A K 3

the correct bid is three no-trump.

OPENING SUIT BIDS OF THREE AND FOUR

The characteristic feature of Opening suit bids of one and two is that, whatever their honour strength, the trump suit is apt to be shaky and requires, as a rule, *adequate trump support* from partner.

The characteristic feature of Opening suit bids of three or higher is that, whatever their honour strength, the trump suit requires *no additional trump support* from partner since it is almost solid with at least 5 sure trump tricks.

All three-bids, major or minor,¹ should be governed by the vulnerability of the player making them. When vulner-

¹ Many players prefer to use a minor suit three-bid as showing a long, unquestionably established suit, such as A K Q J x x x, with a Queen or a Knave in each of the other suits, thus inviting partner to bid three no-trump if he hold some strength in the other suits to insure their being stopped. While this meaning may be given to a minor suit three-bid if the partners agree upon it, the writer prefers, when not vulnerable, to preserve the advantage of using the three-bid as a pure shut-out when holding a long, ragged suit and unbalanced distribution.

able, he should be very strong and never vary from the minimum of 8 sure winners. When not vulnerable, he may shade three-bids even to the semi-psychic class, provided the trump suit is very strong.

The function of the Opening three-bid, when vulnerable, is to provide a strength-showing bid which may produce a game even though partner be too weak to make even a shaded response to an Opening one-bid; yet not containing a sufficient number of honour-tricks for a Forcing two-bid which would demand a game contract even with no support at all from partner.

An Opening bid of three in a suit guarantees:

1. *When not vulnerable*—six to seven winners in the hand, including not more than 1 honour-trick outside, and sometimes no outside honour strength.

Examples: ♠ K J 10 9 6 5 4 ♥ 7 ♦ A 8 2 ♣ 5 4
 ♠ 4 ♥ 6 ♦ J 10 4 3 ♣ K Q 9 8 7 5 3

2. *When vulnerable*—a minimum of eight sure tricks in the hand, including at least 1 honour-trick outside and usually more—in all the hand should contain 3 honour-tricks or more. When the bid suit is a minor, the trump suit should be solid.

Examples: ♠ A K Q J 6 5 ♥ 6 ♦ K J 4 3 ♣ A 7
 ♠ A 9 ♥ 6 4 ♦ A K Q 8 6 4 2 ♣ K J

The Responding Hand should raise or take out on the following basis:

1. *When not vulnerable*—A single Raise (from three to four) may be given when holding about three winners, which must be honour- or ruffing-tricks. The Responding Hand should recognize the possibility that a not vulnerable three-bid may be very weak, and should never shade the values required for a Raise.

2. *When vulnerable*—The three-bid may be raised to game, if in a major suit, with about 1 honour-trick, or with a singleton and at least 2 trumps. A Take-out in three no-

trump is permissible when the one honour-trick represents stoppers, in two of the other suits, such as K x in one suit and Q x x in another. When holding only $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick, the hand should contain the possibility of a ruffing-trick such as a doubleton and three trumps. When the Opening three-bid is in a minor suit, the Responding Hand may raise to game when holding about 2 honour-tricks, or 1 honour- and 1 ruffing-trick; he may bid three no-trump when holding about 1 honour-trick in two of the other suits or some stopper such as J 10 x x or Q x x in each of the other three suits; or he may take out in any five-card biddable higher ranking suit.

In valuing Raises for Opening three or four bids, it is not wise to count mere length in side suits, since the Opening bid has disclosed a hand of the rigid type, which probably will make impossible the development of such tricks in time to be of value in fulfilling the contract.

One writer has borrowed Mr. Lenz's idea of a *Forcing* three-bid (which had at least some merit) and has made it infinitely worse by advocating that such a bid guarantees a long solid trump suit and, in all, *ten* sure winners! This is the height of naïveté peculiar to routine theorists. Before a hand of such type could be dealt one might safely travel to Shanghai and back. It is an equally safe bet that when and if such a mastodon be dealt, partner will have forgotten all about the convention and will blissfully pass. The principle of *economy of bids* requires that every bid be made to work often and efficiently. To reserve such an active range as that of three-bids for the type of hands that will occur once in a blue moon is equally characteristic of persons who theorize but do not know how to play, as of those who play well but do not know how to theorize.

OPENING SUIT BIDS OF FOUR

Opening major or minor suit four-bids are shut-out or Defensive overbids. While guaranteeing a powerful long trump suit (not necessarily solid) such bids may have no

outside strength whatever and therefore are unsuited for Penalty Doubles or Take-outs by partner.

The Approach-Forcing System theory of shut-out bids is as follows:

The longer the suit is, the weaker the hand is if played against the opponents' best trump bid. A hand with a seven- or eight-card trump suit and no outside honour strength is a gift from the Greeks. For this reason it is best to take the bull by the horns and bid high enough at least to make it difficult for the opponents to get together. It is true that even a four-bid will more often than not fail to shut out strong opposing bids. The fact remains that if opponents do bid they may easily land in a losing bid with the bidding so crowded that a possible better game bid, or even a Slam bid, is definitely shut out.

In the Culbertson System Opening four-bids show hands which are strong *distributionally* but which are *defensively* weak against an adverse suit bid which is quite likely to come. Superficially it seems a logical absurdity that a higher bid should be weaker than a lower bid, such as a two-bid. It is obvious, however, that the stronger the hand is in honour-tricks the less one has to fear from the opponents; hence, it is to one's advantage to start as low as possible and carefully avoid shutting out information from partner (Approach principle). With strong hands even an Opening one no-trump bid should be avoided as much as possible. With a long practically solid suit and no outside strength one is in the hands of the enemy, and one's best bet is to hack his way through by a sudden attack, hoping that in the resulting confusion he may escape with a minimum loss.

For this reason shut-out bids are essentially *overbids* so calculated that, if opponents double, the penalty will not be greater than the value of the game which opponents would probably score at their own bid.

All Opening four-bids are based on the Rule of Two and Three and therefore show the following minimum playing-tricks, *but do not imply an honour-strength in side suits*:

1. When not vulnerable—7 playing-tricks.

Example:

♠ QJ 10 8 7 5 3 2 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A ♣ 4 2
 ♠ — ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ A QJ 9 7 4 3 2 ♣ 10 6

2. When vulnerable—8 sure winners with less than one outside honour-trick.

Example:

♠ A K QJ 9 7 6 2 ♥ 4 ♦ 6 4 3 ♣ 5
 ♠ 4 ♥ 6 ♦ QJ 10 ♣ K QJ 10 9 7 5 4

With a hand of this type the very fact that a player has such a long, glittering spade suit may carry within it its own destruction. For, the longer the suit in player's own hand, the fewer cards of the same suit remain for opponents' hands, thereby increasing the *distributional values* of their hands at a heart, diamond or club bid. This is true, especially, if partner has passed, as there are A K QJ in three suits outstanding against the hand.

An Opening minor five-bid (rarely used) also follows the Rule of Two and Three, and consequently shows 1 playing-trick more than a four-bid would show under the same vulnerability conditions.

Good strategy requires that Pre-emptive bids be occasionally varied with stronger bids in order to trap the opponents. At other times a hand with a very long suit and no outside strength may be passed originally, or bid as one-odd, again with the object of surprising the unwary opponents. It is an essential part of the Culbertson System that any bid, however perfect theoretically, must also include the factor of psychology.

How to raise Pre-emptive bids: It is a fallacy to state that an original game bid is a 'stop' bid as far as Slams are concerned. There are no peremptory 'stop' bids in the Culbertson System. However, the player knows that when his partner bids originally a game in a major or a minor, he

*borrow*s from the Dummy 2 tricks if vulnerable, and 3 tricks if not vulnerable. His Raises, therefore, begin after deduction of these winners, and he should also keep in mind the fact that the Declarer has hardly any outside honour strength.

CHAPTER X

THE EIGHT FORCING SITUATIONS

THE FORCING PRINCIPLE

THE FORCING principle and various Forcing bids were originated and developed by the author early in 1927 as a necessary and logical corollary of the Approach principle in bidding. They are now standard and form the basis of any system of Bridge. They require the partnership, with strong hands, to keep the bidding open until a game contract is reached, the primary object of the Force being to ensure the selection of the best bid for the twenty-six cards held by the partnership, without risking a premature pass; the secondary object of the Force is to reach in a scientific manner a Small or a Grand Slam bid. The Forcing bid is one of the most valuable in Contract Bridge—if it is not abused. It conveys direct inferences regarding honour strength and distribution, and indirect or negative inferences when a player fails to force. There are in all eight Forcing situations. Five are Forcing to game only, and three are Forcing even after a game is reached. They are as follows:

1. The Opening two-bid in a suit.
2. The Jump Take-out in a new suit.
3. The Jump Rebid in a new suit.
4. The Overcall in the opponents' suit.
5. Inferential Forcing bids.
6. The Four No-trump Overcall of an opponent's four-bid.
7. The Four No-trump Take-out of partner's bid.
8. The Five No-trump Take-out of partner's bid.

THE FIVE GAME-FORCING SITUATIONS¹

1. The Forcing Two-Bid

See Forcing Two-Bid (Chapter IX).

¹ For more detailed analysis see the respective headings in various chapters.

2. *The Forcing Take-out*

The second Forcing situation occurs when the partner of the Opening bidder makes a Jump suit Take-out (a bid of one more than necessary to take out in another suit). This bid, unlike the Opening bid of two in a suit, is based upon known values in both the Opening and Responding Hands. To justify a Forcing Take-out, the Responding Hand should hold $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

Assume the Opening bid to have been one heart and that Second Hand has passed. Any of the following hands are strong enough to justify a Forcing Take-out.

Bid two spades:

♠ A K J 9 6 ♥ K 4 3 ♦ K Q 6 4 ♣ 2

Bid three diamonds:

♠ A J 10 ♥ J 10 4 ♦ K Q J 10 7 ♣ A 6

Bid three clubs:

♠ K Q 5 ♥ 10 ♦ K J 4 ♣ A Q J 10 7 6

The fact that an opponent has made an intervening bid in no way interferes with the operation of the Forcing Take-out. Thus:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
1 ♠	2 ♣	3 ♦

North's bid is a Forcing Take-out compelling both partners to keep the bidding open until a game contract, or a penalty that is worth taking, is reached.

After any Forcing Take-out partner in his responses should endeavour to keep the bidding low and avoid hectic Jumps, especially when bidding a new suit, unless he wishes to indicate a practically solid suit.

3. *The Forcing Rebid*

The third Forcing situation occurs when a player has opened the bidding and partner has made a regulation response—either a minimum Take-out in a suit or in no-trump. The Opening Hand, with about 5 honour-tricks and another biddable suit (not yet mentioned in the bidding), can now make a Forcing Rebid, which neither

partner may drop until a game contract is reached. Thus:

Opening Hand

1 ♠

3 ♦

Responding Hand

1 N T

Three diamonds is a Forcing Rebid, to which the Responding Hand must answer, and which both partners must keep open, until a final game declaration has been decided upon. It shows 4 to 5 honour-tricks, according to distribution. The Responding Hand is offered a choice of three possible game situations—spades, no-trump or diamonds. In this example three spades is *practically* Forcing, but partner may pass.

Exceptions to the Forcing Rebid

Should the bidding go:

SOUTH

WEST

NORTH

EAST

1 ♥

1 ♠

No bid

No bid

3 ♦

South has made a strong Rebid, an urgent invitation to bid, but the Responding Hand has disclosed that his hand is not even of sufficient strength to make a free Raise. South probably has a quite powerful two-suiter. In this situation, however, the bid is not absolutely Forcing.

Again, should the bidding go:

SOUTH

WEST

NORTH

EAST

1 ♥

No bid

No bid

1 ♠

3 ♦

this also is not a Forcing Rebid, because North, by passing, neatly indicates a nearly blank hand.

4. The Immediate Overcall in an Opponent's Suit

There are two Forcing situations which occur in the bidding of suits previously bid by opponents, according to whether opponents or partnership have opened the bidding. The first and most used of these is an Immediate Overcall in an opponent's Opening suit. This bid is Forcing to game and requires the partner to respond. Naturally, when an adversary has opened the bidding, no effort should be made to force the reaching of a game declaration, except with

hands of tremendous honour and distributional strength. Thus the strength required for this bid must, generally speaking, be but little less than that for an Opening Forcing bid of two in a suit.

Exceptionally, however, an Immediate Overcall in an opponent's bid suit may be made on a hand containing a single powerful suit or a two-suiter, and in this situation the *honour strength* may safely be reduced to about 4 honour-tricks plus.

The Immediate Overcall of two in the suit bid by an adversary ordinarily guarantees control of the first round of the adversely bid suit—that is, either the Ace or a void in the suit. However, it may frequently be made *when holding a singleton in the suit*, because of the necessity of having a bid Forcing to game after the opponents have opened the bidding, or to deceive opponents into leading from some other suit against an eventual Slam contract.

It is, of course, apparent from the logic of the situation that the following bid is Forcing to game:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♦

This bid, where partner has made an Overcall, is not an Immediate Overcall in the bid suit, but it is also a Forcing bid which partner may not pass. It guarantees game at a declaration yet to be determined, and requires West to continue the bidding until a game contract is reached.

In the following situation, however, a Forcing situation does not exist:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Double	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♥		

Here West has failed to overcall at his first opportunity, but instead has doubled for a Take-out. After his Take-out Double, his subsequent bid of hearts is not a Forcing bid, but *discloses a strong playable heart suit*. This is the proper procedure for disclosing a possible psychic bid by an opponent. If the opponent's bid suit is overcalled by partner *immedi-*

ately, the inference is that a void, an Ace or at most a singleton of that suit is held by partner; but if partner, instead of overcalling in opponent's bid suit, doubles first and subsequently overcalls with that suit, the inference is that the opponent has made a bluff bid in the suit.

Examples of the Immediate Overcall of an Opponent's Bid Suit

Over an Opening bid of one diamond, bid two diamonds on—

♠ A J 10 4 3 ♥ A K Q J ♦ — ♣ K Q J 3

Over an Opening bid of one diamond, bid two diamonds on—

♠ A K 10 9 2 ♥ A Q J 7 3 ♦ 5 ♣ A K

Over an Opening bid of one spade, bid two spades on—

♠ — ♥ K Q J 5 ♦ A K Q 9 2 ♣ A Q 10 9

Over an Opening bid of one heart, bid two hearts on—

♠ K Q 10 9 5 3 ♥ — ♦ A K J 10 3 2 ♣ A

The Overcall in a suit bid by the opponents may also be used by the side which has opened the contracting, when it is also Forcing to game. Used in this way, it generally implies support for the suit named by the Opening bidder and implies possibilities of a Slam, even in the lower stages of bidding, if the Opening Hand is more than a minimum. Thus, should the bidding go:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♠

North's bid is the equivalent of a Forcing Take-out, to which the Opening bidder must respond, whether his hand is an absolute minimum or not. In such situations the no-trump response *must show a stopper*, failing which the player should rebid his original suit, however weak.

Similarly, should the bidding go:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	1 ♠	Pass	Pass
2 ♠			

this is a bid Forcing to game and carries with it the clear implication that the South hand in itself is almost strong enough to guarantee a game contract; with the additional information that the first round of the adversely bid suit—in

this case spades—is controlled. When an opponent's suit is overcalled *after* partner has opened the bidding, it must guarantee no loser in at least the first lead of the suit.

5. Inferential Forcing Bids

In addition to the above Forcing bids, other fascinating situations arise at the Bridge table in which bids may be regarded as Forcing *through the sheer logic of a bidding situation*. The object is to keep the bidding low after partner has shown some sign of strength, in order not to shut out, by unnecessary jumps, a better chance for game at three no-trump.

Such 'Forcing to game' situations usually arise (1) *whenever the player responds with two no-trump (either at once or by degrees) and his partner reopens the bidding; or (2) whenever the player raises any bid of partner's (either a simple or a multiple Raise) and partner reopens the bidding with a new suit*. In either situation the fact that partner does not pass but *reopens* the bidding is an inferential Force.

Important Exception: When the Responding (but never the Opening) Hand bids the *same* suit not less than twice and up to a bid of three odd it is a 'sign-off' bid. (See 'Sign-Off' Bids.)

Illustrating the inferential Force:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. SOUTH | NORTH |
| 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ |
| 2 ♦ | 2 N T (not Forcing) |
| 3 ♦ or 3 ♥ or 3 ♠ | |
| (all Forcing) | |
| 2. SOUTH | NORTH |
| 1 ♥ | 3 N T |
| 4 ♦ (Forcing) | |

Although North bids game, South's bid of four diamonds is an inferential Force.

Again:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. SOUTH | NORTH |
| 1 ♠ | 2 N T (not Forcing) |
| 3 ♥ (Forcing) | |

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2. | SOUTH | NORTH |
| | 1 ♠ | 2 ♠ |
| | 3 ♥ (Forcing) | |
| 3. | SOUTH (vulnerable) | NORTH |
| | 2 N T (not forcing) | 3 ♠ (Forcing) |
| 4. | SOUTH | NORTH |
| | 1 ♠ | 2 N T (not Forcing) |
| | 3 ♦ (Forcing) | 3 ♠ (Forcing) |

In none of these situations should partner let the bidding die. In the first example, North is offered the choice of three game-going declarations—spades, hearts or no-trump. In the second, while North's Raise of the Opening bid of one spade to two spades has probably disclosed a weak hand—possibly showing not more than 3 playing-tricks—South has *reopened* the bidding and thus has indicated a hand of probable game strength. He does not, however, wish to forestall the possible response of three no-trump. In the third, South, by his Opening vulnerable bid, has shown the possession of about 5 honour-tricks; North's response of three spades certainly indicates that a game is available either at spades or at no-trump. In the fourth, North's two no-trump response to South's Opening bid of one spade is manifestly not Forcing; however, South has disclosed additional strength by his bid of three diamonds, an inferential Force requiring some further bid from partner. It is quite apparent that South is still doubtful as to what the final contract should be. When North now responds with a bid of three spades, this bid must also be read as a Force, inasmuch as all Forcing bids are Forcing to game. In the following situation it is the Responding Hand that makes an inferential Force:

- | | |
|-------|---------------|
| SOUTH | NORTH |
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ |
| 2 N T | 3 ♣ (Forcing) |

The fact that North *reopens* the bidding in a new suit is a clear inference that a game is desirable. North obviously is unwilling to seek a game by jumping to four clubs, which shuts out a game at three no-trump. Had North bid three

diamonds instead of three clubs, it would have been a 'sign-off' bid.

An Inferential Force With a Non-Biddable Suit

One of the prettiest inferences in the Culbertson System deals with a situation in which partner is inferentially forced with a *non-biddable suit*. For instance:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♦	1 ♥
1 N T	2 N T
3 ♠ ! (Forcing)	

The fact that South *reopens* the bidding after North's bid of two no-trump is an inferential Force. The fact that South responds to North's bid of one heart with one no-trump is an inference that *his subsequent bid of three spades was made on a non-biddable suit*. He, therefore, has in spades either K 10 8 2, or A 10 7 2, or Q J 3 2, or some similar combination. Again:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♥	1 N T
2 N T	3 ♠ ! (Forcing)

The inference is unmistakable that North's spade suit is below the biddable minimum.

A FORCING PASS

Some of the most subtle and logical situations deal with a *pass as a Forcing bid*, when the inference is such that a player is expected to bid again even though his partner has passed. The following is a typical situation in which a pass is actually *Forcing*:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 N T	Double	Redouble	2 ♥
Pass!			

South is forced to pass to enable North to double East's bid of two hearts if he holds trump tricks in hearts. South does not wish to double East's bid because he has no trump strength in hearts; on the other hand, he does not wish to make another bid, and thus tread on partner's toes by shutting out a possible strong Penalty Double by North. Again,

if after a series of strength-showing bids by South and North, South finally bids six spades, but is overcalled by West's seven diamonds, a pass by North is Forcing, requiring that South either double or bid seven spades. Had North preferred that South should not bid seven spades, he would have himself doubled seven diamonds.

The Inferential Forcing Bids are among the most imaginative and thrilling bids of the Culbertson System. They serve an important class of hands which assure a game at some bid *if partner can rebid*, but which are not *quite* strong enough for a Forcing Jump Take-out (requiring at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the Responding Hand) or a Forcing Jump Rebid (requiring about 5 honour-tricks in the Opening Hand) *if partner has a minimum*. When used in conjunction with the new, improved One Over One bids (see Chapter XII), the Inferential Forcing Bid is an instrument of beautiful precision. In fact, one of the principal objections against the antiquated One Over One (with which *all* suit responses of *one* are unconditionally Forcing) is that the scope for Inferential Forcing Bids is considerably reduced. An Inferential Force is a dangerous bid unless handled expertly. A player is cautioned not to confuse Inferential Forces with *Sign-off* bids.

THREE FORCING POST-GAME SITUATIONS

The four and five no-trump bids are typical of dormant, inactive bids that were chronically unemployed. Consequently, in the Culbertson System of 1933 they are being put to work in a startlingly new and efficient manner.

1. *Forcing with a No-Trump Overcall*

An interesting Forcing situation is the four no-trump Overcall¹ of an adverse Opening suit bid of *four* only. It is designed as an effective weapon against an opponent's Pre-emptive four-bid. It is made on powerful freaks of a nature such that a Penalty Double would probably bring in considerably less than the value of a reasonably certain game

¹ This beautiful bid was first suggested and tried by Messrs. L. Watson, O. Jacoby, W. Huske and E. Hymes.

at the Doubler's own bid. Thus, should the bidding go:

Opening Hand

4 ♠

Second Hand

4 N T

The bid of four no-trump is a Forcing bid which partner must not pass. It saves one round of bidding, and at the same time diminishes the risk of playing the hand at a worse-fitting bid. It guarantees the near certainty of game at any suit (other than spades) in which the partner holds four cards. It could easily be made, for instance, on the following holdings:

♠ — ♥ A K Q 3 2 ♦ A K J 10 ♣ A Q J 2
 ♠ 2 ♥ A K Q 3 ♦ A K 10 9 ♣ A K Q J

2. *Two New Forcing Bids After a Game Contract*

After either partner has opened the bidding, any four no-trump or any five no-trump bid is a *Forcing bid* at least once. See the chapter on Slam Bidding for the analysis of this new Culbertson Slam Method.

CHAPTER XI

THE RESPONDING HAND

PARTNER of the Opening Hand is called the Responding Hand. In the Approach-Forcing System the Responding Hand, far from merely assisting, is nearly always the principal hand, and carries the brunt of the bidding. As a rule, the game or Slam value of the Opening Hand is relative, and *depends upon the distribution and balance of honour strength in the Responding Hand*. Accordingly the whole scheme of Contract bidding is so designed that the Opening Hand, whose first bid is necessarily a leap in the dark, 'approaches' with low suit bids and feels out the situation before definitely choosing an attacking or defending position. Only very rarely can the Opening Hand boast of strength so extraordinary as to be practically independent of what partner may hold. In all other situations the player is in the position of a general who is completely in the dark as to the distribution and strength of enemy and allied forces; before exposing his flanks or unmasking his batteries he must cautiously try to connect with his ally (partner) who holds, so to speak, the reserves (playing-tricks in support) upon which he must depend to reach the desired objective—the best bid.

In turn the bids of the Responding Hand are largely based upon information communicated and strength already shown by the Opening Hand. Consequently even a slightly better than average share of honour strength or favourable distribution in the Responding Hand can easily warrant expectations of game. Thus, when Responding Hand holds but $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, the two hands combined have at least 4 honour-tricks out of a total of 8, or as many as the opponents. Since the range of Opening one-bids extends from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, the game is by no means excluded.

A hand containing as little as $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks looms large indeed when combined with partner's Opening bid; and a

hand with $4\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, when added to partner's $2\frac{1}{2}$, definitely warrants Slam expectations. Players must learn to visualize this important factor: after partner opens the bidding, the strength of the Responding Hand must be gauged with a totally different yardstick from that used when deciding whether to open the bidding.

THE STRUCTURE OF PARTNERSHIP INFERENCES

All partnership methods are built on the basis of bidding minimums and maximums, logically assumed. The Opening bidder assumes, and *includes in his bidding minimums*, definite expectancies in the Responding Hand. These logical assumptions are *temporary substitutes* for more precise information to be obtained in the course of the bidding, and only a weak or a wooden player continues to take them for granted during the subsequent bidding.

There are three kinds of expectancies:

1. Honour strength.
2. Trump distribution.
3. Total playing-tricks or winners (including honour-tricks).

It is the job of the Responding Hand to confirm, add to or deny these assumptions.

RESPONSES TO OPENING SUIT BIDS OF ONE

Millions of possible combinations in the Responding Hand, its varying distributions and degrees of honour strength, are readily classified according to four *bidding situations*:

1. The Pass.
2. The Raise.
3. The Take-out (with suit or no-trump).
4. The Penalty Double. (See Chapter XVII.)

I. THE PASS

A pass, though technically not classed as a bid, is the most eloquent and important of all bids. It is the loudest 'warning', and, except for the 'Sign-off' bids, possibly the only 'rescue'. The general inference from a pass is that the hand

is decidedly *below* average in support of partner's one-bid, and therefore the Responding Hand abandons all reasonable hopes for game.¹ While most players know how to bid, few as yet have learned the subtle art of passing. The difficulty in the art of passing lies in knowing the precise line of demarcation between the no-bid land and the carefully measured area of bidding minimums.

Players who are over-conservative in their passes, even by as little as $\frac{1}{2}$ trick, will seriously hamper the tactics of the Opening Hand, and those who are habitually 'a Queen shy' for a justifiable bid will often drive the Opening Hand to contract for a hopeless game when part-score is certain, or, worse yet, will cause the Opening Hand to become unduly cautious.

The minimum requirements for a pass are (assuming partner has opened with a one-bid) as follows:

1. Any hand which contains no Raise, no biddable suit and *less than 1 plus honour-tricks*.
2. Any hand which, though containing a minimum biddable suit, *has less than 1 honour-trick*.

Adequate support of partner's suit, six-card majors with about $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick or freak distributions are excepted.

A hand which contains 1 plus honour-tricks, or a fair suit with but 1 honour-trick, is a biddable hand (if intervening opponent passes) and requires some sort of response other than a pass. When, however, it is necessary to overcall, say, one spade with two diamonds, the hand should contain about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

To illustrate, the Opening Hand bids one spade when holding:

♠ A J 10 3 2 ♥ A Q 9 4 ♦ Q 10 2 ♣ 7

Consider the following three possible holdings of the Responding Hand:

1. ♠ Q 8 6 5 ♥ 10 8 ♦ K 9 7 6 ♣ 4 3 2

¹ There are a few exceptional situations, such as a Penalty Pass, or a pass to allow partner to choose between a Penalty Double and a bid, in which the pass shows strength.

2. ♠ Q 6 ♥ J 8 7 3 ♦ A 9 6 3 ♣ 8 5 3

3. ♠ 9 7 6 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ A 5 4 3

When holding No. 1, Responding Hand must raise to two spades (a shaded Raise). When holding No. 2, Responding Hand must take out with one no-trump (a 'negative' no-trump). When holding No. 3, Responding Hand must *pass* (the hand contains no Raise and is a Queen shy for a no-trump bid).

Many players would pass in all three foregoing examples. It would be an error. More than ninety per cent of Opening bids are *necessarily* bids of one, and include hands ranging from the minimum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ to the maximum of $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. If the Responding Hand holds but 1 plus honour-tricks the game is by no means excluded, because the Opening Hand may easily hold honour-strength in excess of the minimum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, or another and better fitting suit bid.

As for the danger of misleading the Opening bidder, the inference is clear that, if the Responding Hand gives but one Raise or bids but one no-trump, he obviously is too weak to make a higher bid. Unless the Responding Hand makes every effort to keep the bidding open, the tremendous advantage of Opening with one-bids will be much diminished, if not nullified.

The Responding Hand passes when its strength is below partner's *worst* expectations; the Responding Hand makes a minimum response when his support is not much above partner's natural assumptions; and the Responding Hand jumps the bid, flashing a possibility of game or Slam, when his hand is considerably better than the Opening Hand has a logical right to assume. In this manner both the Opening and Responding Hands start with a definite set of 'bidding minimums' and assumptions and, as the bidding unfolds, build up their structure of inferences.

When the player on the left of the Opening one-bid passes, the Responding Hand should usually keep the bidding open by bidding one no-trump with hands containing 1 plus honour-tricks or by giving a shaded Raise. Such hands are

of but average expectancy, and theoretically are already assumed by the Opening bidder. Nevertheless, they must be bid in order to afford another opportunity to the Opening Hand, whose values necessarily range from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to even $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, or who may easily have another and better bid.

Such one no-trump responses merely inform partner that

(a) The hand (as a rule) contains insufficient support for the bid suit. It may in some cases have adequate trump support, but be of balanced distribution and thus fail to provide the playing-tricks to justify a Raise; or it may be in a minor suit.

(b) The hand contains no other biddable five-card suit. As a general rule, a Take-out bid of two on a four-card suit is not recommended unless quite strong.

(c) The hand contains but minimum honour strength (1 plus to about 2 honour-tricks)—otherwise the response would be two or three and not one no-trump. The 'negative' one no-trump is an indispensable corollary to the Approach principle.

If there is an intervening bid, a Raise should be given only on the basis of strength actually held in the hand, for the opponent's Overcall affords the Opening bidder a chance to speak again. There is likewise no occasion for the 'minimum response' of one no-trump, which is designed for the sole purpose of giving partner, without increasing the contract, an opportunity to bid again.

2. THE RAISE

The term Raise is restricted to bids in support of partner's bids. The inference from a Raise is that partner's bid seems to be the best for the combined hands and that no further search is necessary. At the same time the raising strength of the hand is inferred from the *number* of Raises given. A Raise from one to two shows a minimum or a fair hand; a Raise from one to three is a strength-showing bid and *therefore practically Forcing, leaving to partner an option of passing only with an absolute minimum Opening bid*; a Raise from one to

four is partly Pre-emptive and partly shows great strength—but in either case it shows at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and powerful distribution. Hence it is a mild Slam try.

To illustrate:

(Dealer)

SOUTH

1 ♠

NORTH

3 ♠

The first inference is that North has fair trump support, and that spades is presumably the best bid.

The second inference is that North, who made a double Raise, has about 5 playing-tricks, for otherwise a single or a triple Raise would be correct.

The third inference is that the Responding Hand probably contains less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, for otherwise a Forcing Take-out would have been made.

The great majority of Opening trump bids of one are based on four-card or weak five-card suits. Such bids can be successful only on the assumption that the Responding Hand will not raise except on good length or strength in trumps.

*The minimum trump support for all suit bids of one is Q 3 2, or four small trumps or, occasionally, J 10 2.*¹

When holding but three (or fewer) low trumps, Q 2 or even K 2, the Responding Hand must not raise partner's first bid, but should deny it with some other bid, or pass.

To illustrate:

After the Opening Hand has bid one spade, the Responding Hand should bid two diamonds when holding:

♠ 10 4 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ K J 6 5 2 ♣ A 4 3

Only when the same suit is rebid in spite of partner's

¹ The so-called 'normal' trump support of three low trumps or a Q 2, universally advocated until the introduction of the Approach-Forcing System, is the largest single source of loss even among the better players. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that four-card suits are not bid, it is still impossible to avoid frequent disasters, due to inadequate trump support and not to 'bad breaks' as is usually claimed. To support an unrebid suit on but two low trumps, as is still done by some, is suicidal.

denial can partner support it with three low trumps or less.

Even when a four-card suit bid is supported, the player should not neglect to show its length during the bidding:

SOUTH

1 ♥

3 N T !

NORTH

3 ♥

4 ♥ !

South's three no-trump usually shows a four-card suit and a balanced distribution. North is thus forewarned but still prefers hearts.

'Preference' is not a Raise

When the Opening Hand has bid two suits and the player on his left passes, the Responding Hand is often forced to show 'preference' by selecting the suit which he can best support. Such 'preference' is in the nature of a response to an embryonic Forcing bid and is not a free Raise.

With equal trump length in each suit (3 and 3, for instance), the Responding Hand should prefer, as a rule, the first bid suit. With greater length in one but strength in the other suit (7 4 3 2 against K 2), the Responding Hand should prefer the longer suit.

When the Opening Hand, however, bids a lower-ranking suit first and a higher-ranking suit subsequently, a decided preference should be given to the former even *at the price of an increase in the contract*.

For instance, after the Opening Hand has bid first one diamond and later two spades, the Responding Hand should bid three diamonds when holding:

♠ 10 9 8 ♥ QJ 8 5 ♦ 4 3 2 ♣ 7 6 4

It is obvious that the Opening Hand would not deliberately place partner in this position if he were not prepared to play the hand at a possibly increased contract.

A pass after the last bid suit shows a weak hand, *but also satisfaction with the last suit*.

A player should be careful to avoid misleading partner by giving a mere 'preference' Raise when he has a real Raise.

3. THE TAKE-OUT

An Overcall of partner's bid with a *different* suit (or no,

trump) is a Take-out.

The usual inference is that, though the hand may contain some elements of honour strength, its distribution is not suited to partner's bid. For this reason, Take-out bids are sometimes called 'denial' bids. They 'deny' support in partner's bids, which must not be confused with 'a rescue'—a fallacy even more deadly in Contract than in Auction. In order to avoid confusion, every Take-out bid—in fact, any type of bid—is a come-on bid and shows some honour strength, however slight. It is always a step forward—toward the game—not backward. The only exceptions are the rescue bids discussed further under the heading 'Sign-Off Bids', where the 'rescue' inference cannot be mistaken by partner.

Not all Take-outs necessarily deny Q 3 2, or four small trumps, which is the normal minimum trump support. To convey more precise information as to distribution, the Responding Hand will often make a Take-out and subsequently support partner's original declaration, the usual inference then being *that his trump support is at least as good as though no Take-out had been made.*

This practice is particularly common with Forcing Take-outs, when both partners are assured that the bidding will be kept open. In other situations, the Responding Hand may have fair support in partner's minor suit bid but prefer a cheaper contract—a major suit or no-trump.

Therefore, the Take-out

- (a) *affirms* a certain minimum honour strength (about 1 honour-trick or more),
- (b) *denies* (though not necessarily) adequate trump support in partner's bid suit, and
- (c) *offers* tentatively another bid.

APPROACH RESPONSES

There are suit and no-trump Take-outs.

When the bidding is still below a game, if the Responding Hand holds a choice between a biddable suit and a one no-trump Take-out, the suit should, as a rule, be preferred.

To illustrate, assume that the Opening Hand bids one heart and that the Responding Hand holds:

♠ A J 10 9 ♥ 7 3 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ J 10 5 4

The proper Take-out is one spade and not no-trump. The no-trump Take-out may definitely suppress a better fit in spades. Should partner hold no support in spades, the no-trump is available as a subsequent bid without increasing the contract. Should partner, however, hold but a bare minimum Opening bid and pass, there is no possible game, whatever the bid may be.

THE NO-TRUMP TAKE-OUT

The no-trump Take-out signifies that the Responding Hand

(a) lacks adequate trump support for partner's bid suit or *has a balanced distribution*,

(b) lacks any other biddable suit, and

(c) has at least 1 plus honour-tricks.

These inferences are general only and have many important exceptions. For instance, if partner bids one spade and a player holds:

♠ Q 10 6 ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ A 9 5 4 ♣ Q 3 2

his proper response is one no-trump, *in spite* of adequate trump support. Add ♥ A and his response would be two no-trump, in spite of the apparent denial of trump support. Should partner rebid his spade suit, thus showing probably an unbalanced *hand distribution* (something like 5-4-3-1 or 6-4-2-1) the next response would be a Raise in spades.¹

¹ The principles of the modern Theory of Distributions developed by the author for Auction Bridge in 1922 remain unchanged for Contract. One of these principles is to the effect that hand distributions 4 (trumps)-3-3-3, 3 (trumps)-4-4-2 and 3 (trumps)-5-3-2 are so deficient in both the ruffing and long-suit values in the Dummy that no-trump becomes the 'cheapest' bid and the *tendency* is toward no-trump bids. But it is a fallacy to assume that, simply because the Dummy is distributed 4-3-3-3, the hand must necessarily be played at no-trump: if one of the two hands is *unbalanced*, say, 5-4-3-1 or 5-5-3-0, the hand is still played better at

A Jump two no-trump or three no-trump Take-out of partner's Opening one-bid in a suit will quite likely include two or three of partner's trumps usually headed by a good honour. This is especially true if partner's bid is a minor suit, because the majority of game hands are not quite strong enough to warrant playing for a five-odd contract in a minor suit rather than three-odd at no-trump. Similarly, a Jump two no-trump response to partner's Opening one-bid may frequently be made on a hand such as this:

♠ 9 3 2 (trumps) ♥ K 8 7 ♦ A K 10 8 4 ♣ J 5

The hand is far too weak to force; it is too strong for a simple Take-out of two diamonds—hence the Jump two no-trump, even though in violation of the Approach principle.

No-trump Take-outs, which are never Forcing, are of two kinds, minimum and strength-showing (see No-trump Valuation) as follows:

Negative:

1. A one no-trump Take-out is a 'minimum' or 'negative' response and shows *about* 1 plus to 2 plus honour-tricks unless there be an intervening bid by opponents, when it shows a fair hand including a stopper in the adverse suit.

Strength-showing:

2. A Jump two no-trump Take-out is a strength response, and shows at least 2½ but, as a rule, not more than 3 plus honour-tricks, except with distribution 4-3-3-3.

The bid is not Forcing, but it is a mighty urgent 'invitation' to do something. Too many players pass partner's Jump two no-trump, not realizing that only a *bedrock minimum* Opening bid, without the slightest 'plus' and with 4-3-3-3 distribution, would justify a pass. As a result of their conservatism, the discouraged partner starts bidding three no-trump on borderline hands. Not only are penalties unnecessarily conceded, but partner is prevented from offering an additional choice between suit bids of three and three no-trump. The whole range of Inferential Forcing Bids (see

a favourable trump bid than at no-trump. See the chapter on Higher Strategy of Bidding.

The Eight Forcing Situations) is practically eliminated. For instance, *one heart, three no-trump*. If the heart bidder has ♠ A J 10 9, he must now either risk a four spade bid, which partner may be forced to deny with five hearts, or pass three no-trump and risk the failure of the no-trump when a game is certain in spades.

Some writers and players are guilty of the even greater fallacy of requiring that a two no-trump Take-out be *unconditionally Forcing*. This is like jumping into the river to escape the rain. When unconditionally Forcing, the two no-trump response becomes one of the worst bids in expert play, for the following reasons:

- (a) It eliminates all but strong Opening bids;
- (b) There is no way of judging precisely even a slight additional value which a *free* Rebid by the Opening Hand would disclose.
- (c) The definite and important range of values from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 plus honour-tricks is thrown into a heap with stronger hands, the result being a wild guessing contest between partners. The three no-trump bid becomes something big but indefinite.

3. A Jump three no-trump Take-out is a very strong response and shows at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. It is equivalent to a Forcing Take-out, except that it denies a biddable suit. It is a mild Slam try.

THE CULBERTSON SLAM METHOD

(See Slam Bids)

4. *Any* four no-trump Take-out (Jump or gradual) is *unconditionally Forcing* and partner must respond at least once. It is a Slam try, but partners may sign off with a suit bid of five. It shows, among other values that should justify a Slam try, either

- (a) three Aces, or
- (b) two Aces and a King of any suit previously bid by either partner.

The four no-trump *Take-out* must not be confused with the four no-trump *Overcall* of an opponent's four-bid, which is

also Forcing but is used only in the sense of an extraordinary Take-out Double.

5. *Any* five no-trump Take-out (Jump or gradual) is *unconditionally* Forcing and partner must respond at least once. It is a Grand Slam try although partner may sign off at a six-bid. It shows:

(a) two Aces—no more, no less—when bid *after* four no-trump;

(b) three Aces and a King of any suit previously bid by either partner, when the five no-trump is bid *immediately*—that is, when four no-trump is not mentioned.

The four and five no-trump bids are made after either partner has shown strength and are not, as a rule, jumped at once.

With no-trump Take-outs, as with double Raises, the full honour-trick value of the hand must be shown at once, but in so doing a player should allow a certain leeway for partner's imagination.

SUIT TAKE-OUTS

(FORCING AND NON-FORCING)

Suit Take-outs are of two kinds:

1. Forcing (Jump) Take-outs, which always flash the signal for game at some bid, and frequently indicate a Slam possibility.

2. Regulation (non-Jump) Take-outs, which may show but minimum strength and which, to score game, require that partner hold Rebid values (honour or distributional).

Forcing Take-outs¹ are identified in the following manner:

A bid of one more odd-trick than necessary (a Jump) in a different suit is a Forcing Take-out, provided that such bid is below a game contract and that partner (not opponents) has opened the bidding.

A bid of two more odd-tricks than necessary is *not* Forcing even though it be below a game contract and in a new suit. It also follows that Jump Raises, Jump no-trump Take-outs and even Jump suit Take-outs, when higher than a game

¹ Also see The Eight Forcing Situations (Chapter X).

contract (Slam invitations), are *not absolutely Forcing*. They are urgent invitations and partner should respond 95 times out of 100—but five times in 100 partner may pass. A Forcing bid, on the contrary, is 100 per cent obligatory.

Forcing Take-outs are not restricted to the Responding Hand but may be used by either partner. When a bid of one more than necessary is made in a new suit by the Opening Hand, this Jump Take-out is Forcing, and is known as a *Forcing Rebid*. It shows, of course, a second bid-dable suit, with about 5 honour-tricks in the hand, or but $4\frac{1}{2}$ if the trump suits are quite strong.

To illustrate:

(Dealer)		
SOUTH		NORTH
1 ♥		1 N T
3 ♣		

South's bid of three clubs is Forcing, requiring partner not to pass, and to choose between responding with hearts, clubs or three no-trump.

If the bidding is:

(Dealer)			
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	No bid	No bid	1 ♠ or 1 N T
3 ♣			

South's Rebid of three clubs is not Forcing.

The word *Forcing* has but one meaning: *partner must not pass, no matter what the nature of his hand, but is required to keep the bidding open until some game bid is reached*.

Partner has no 'option' whatsoever—except to bid. Moreover, after any Forcing bid *both partners* are required to keep the bidding open, and are released only when game at some bid (or a suitable penalty) is arrived at.

To illustrate:

(Dealer)		
SOUTH		NORTH
1 ♦		2 ♠

After such a Forcing Take-out by North, neither South

nor North can drop the bidding as long as it is below a game contract. A Forcing Take-out (like the Forcing two-bid) is an automatic signal to contract for a game.

The assurance that partner will not pass too soon—and this is the fundamental obligation of all Forcing bids—makes it possible to unravel, through a series of precise inferences, the distributional patterns and honour values of partnership hands which in game and Slam bidding are vital.

Scientific Contract is virtually impossible without the Approach principle and its corollaries, the Forcing bids.¹

To illustrate, assume that the Opening Hand bids one diamond when holding:

♠ 6 5 ♥ K 10 5 4 ♦ A K 3 2 ♣ J 6 4

and the Responding Hand bids two spades (in response to Opening bidder's one diamond) when holding:

♠ A K 9 8 4 ♥ A Q 9 8 ♦ Q 6 ♣ 10 9

After the minimum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks shown by the Opening bid, the $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the Responding Hand practically guarantee a game at some bid, *provided the partnership hands can be fitted to the proper bid.*

Without Forcing methods, any bid by the Responding Hand would be a wild guess.

¹ The Forcing principle and Forcing bids were developed and named by the author as a logical extension of the Approach System of Auction. The theory and precise requirements for two-bids and Take-outs were published for the first time in the *Auction Bridge Magazine* in the December, 1928, issue, under the title, 'The Paradox of the Forcing Bid'. The new methods seemed to be so radical that the writer issued this prudent warning: 'A player must keep in mind that the principle of Forcing bids in Contract, however fool-proof theoretically and though already tested against the strongest competition, will need a little more time before it can become definitely a part of Contract bidding'. That the methods are sound is proved by the fact that since then the Approach-Forcing System has spread throughout the world, and its principles have been incorporated under one name or another in every known system.

Only Forcing Take-outs can fully and satisfactorily disclose the distributional values of partnership hands and, at the same time, avoid the risk of a premature pass. The bidding will develop as follows:

The Opening Hand

1 ¹
2 N T ²
4 ⁴

The Responding Hand

2 ¹
3 ³
All pass

Analysis:

¹ A Forcing Take-out: 'Partner, keep open our communications at any cost. There is a game somewhere. Have you any spades?'

² A minimum response: 'Partner, I am holding fast, but I warn you that I have no additional values and probably inadequate spades.'

³ Offering a choice: 'I am rushing reinforcements. How about hearts?'

⁴ A Raise: 'Satisfied.' (If the Opening Hand held no support in hearts, the proper bid would have been three no-trump—a minimum response.)

The player must keep in mind that, as between the Opening (Forcing) two-bid and the Forcing Take-out, the latter is by far the more important, and forms the backbone of the Approach-Forcing System. An Opening two-bid, though more spectacular, is rarely used, because combinations in which unusual strength is concentrated in *one* hand are also rare; Forcing Take-outs are, on the contrary, indispensable in arriving at the greater number of game and Slam bids.

Minimum requirements for a Forcing Take-out are:

1. *A biddable five-card or longer suit.*

It need not be a strong suit. With about 4 honour-tricks, biddable four-card suits can also be used.

2. *At least 3½ honour-tricks or but 3+ honour-tricks with a nearly solid trump suit.*¹

¹ In the earlier editions of *Contract Bridge Blue Book* (1930-1932), the requirements for Forcing Take-outs were given as at least 3 honour-tricks with good distribution. This led to confusion and is now remedied.

This gives a safe minimum of from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 honour-tricks for the combined hands.

With few exceptions, practically all Responding Hands containing $3\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks *are first passed through the sieve of the Forcing Take-out*. This bid is at the same time the most thrilling and the basic bid of the Culbertson System, and now has become the basic bid of every system of Contract. The advantages of this bid are so great that, with rare and quite strong hands that yet do not contain even a biddable four-card suit as a vehicle for Forcing, it is permissible to force even with a three-card suit provided it is of lower rank than the suit originally bid by partner.

Example of Forcing with a Three-Card Suit

Assume partner opens with one spade and you hold:

♠ K 9 7 4 3 ♥ A K ♦ A 3 2 ♣ K Q 4

the proper bid is three diamonds. Subsequent bidding will determine whether a Grand Slam should be bid.

PARTNER'S RESPONSES TO A FORCING TAKE-OUT

It must be borne in mind that the most radical and original feature of the Forcing Take-out is that the Jump does not necessarily show great length or strength in the *bid suit*, but merely game (or Slam) strength in the *hand*. *Partner, therefore, must assume a minimum trump suit and support or deny accordingly.*

The Opening bidder's response to any Forcing Take-out made by his partner will depend on the nature of his hand.

First choice: If able, show another biddable suit. Do not jump in your suit unless you guarantee not more than one trump loser.

Second choice: Rebid your own trump suit if it is a strong five-card or a fair six-card suit. Jump the Rebid only if your suit has not more than one trump loser.

Third choice: Support partner's Jump suit bid if holding at least Q 3 2, or four small trumps. If holding more than the value of one Raise (that is, more than about $1\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks over the Opening bid values) jump the full amount of

Raises your hand contains or reserve the second Jump for a Slam try according to circumstances.

Fourth choice: Jump the two no-trump response to three no-trump if holding at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

Fifth choice: Lacking any full-trick values other than those already shown in the Opening bid, *always respond with the required number of no-trump to take out your partner.* This constitutes a *minimum response*, denying additional support and merely repeating the Opening bid. Any other bid but no-trump shows, as a rule, some added strength.

If, however, an opponent at your left has overcalled your bid, and despite this Overcall your partner has made a Forcing Take-out, a bid of the necessary number of no-trump to overcall definitely promises a stopper in the suit adversely bid. Lacking a stopper in the adversely bid suit following a Forcing Take-out by your partner, your correct response, if you are unable to support your partner's Take-out, *is to rebid your own suit*, though only a four-card suit.

To illustrate the Forcing Take-out and responses:

(Dealer)

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

2 ♠—a Forcing Take-out

If South bids 3 ♦, he indicates a new biddable suit.

If South bids 3 ♥, he indicates Rebid strength in hearts.

If South bids 4 ♥, he indicates a six-card or longer suit that cannot lose more than 1 trick.

If South bids 3 ♠, he indicates at least Q 3 2, or four small spades.

If South bids 4 ♠, he indicates good trump support, a singleton or a doubleton and at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

If South bids 3 N T, he indicates no added suit value, but 1 extra honour-trick.

If South bids 2 N T, it is a minimum response.

Reverse this situation as follows:

(Dealer)

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

2 ♥

3 ♠—a Forcing Take-out

It is South who is now making a Forcing Take-out (Forcing Rebid), and, at the same time, warning North that his spade suit may have but four trumps, although the hand will contain at least 4½ honour-tricks. North's responses should follow the same general outline as in the first example.

TO FORCE TWICE IS NEVER NECESSARY

After the first Forcing Take-out, it is not necessary for *either* partner to force again; it is a part of the Forcing principle that the bidding must automatically be kept open until a game is contracted for. The advantage of this principle is that partners derive the fullest possible benefit from responses at the lowest possible round of bidding, and escape the confusion incident to crowding the bidding.

To illustrate:

(Dealer)

SOUTH

1 ♠

NORTH

3 ♦—a Forcing Take-out

South holds:

♠ A K 10 7 6 ♥ A Q 10 6 2 ♦ K 8 ♣ 5

South is assured of a Small Slam after North's Forcing Take-out. A process of elimination discloses that North, to justify his Force, must hold at least ♣ A Q, ♦ A and ♥ K, or their equivalent. South's proper response, however, is *three hearts*. The full strength of the hand will be shown *after* partner has been heard from, and a game contract is reached. If North now responds with five hearts, showing an even stronger hand than already indicated by his Forcing Take-out, a Grand Slam is indicated. See also Chapter X on The Eight Forcing Situations.

REGULATION (NON-FORCING) SUIT TAKE-OUTS

Regulation Take-outs: When the response to the Opening one-bid is not jumped—that is, when it is not higher than strictly necessary to overcall—it is a Regulation (non-Jump) suit Take-out. It shows any biddable trump suit and an average or even a fair hand containing not more than 3+ honour-tricks. The most common form of Regulation Take-

out is a response with a suit bid of one to partner's Opening suit bid of one. Such a response of one will be made on many strong hands containing as much as 3+ honour-tricks.

When the response to the Opening one-bid is a Regulation Take-out of one in another suit—*One Over One*—Opening bidder should, almost always, give Responding Hand another opportunity to bid. Such a Response is 99.44 per cent Forcing. A Response of, say, one heart over partner's Opening one club bid, is *an inference that the maximum honour strength of his hand is 3 plus honour-tricks* while the minimum may be as low as $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick in a six-card suit.

The response of two spades over an Opening one heart bid is *an inference that the minimum honour strength* of the hand is at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, or that, if but 3 plus honour-tricks, the trump suit is solid. Generally speaking—as part of the Approach Principle—so long as the bidding remains at the stage of one odd in a suit, either partner should, as a rule, try to keep the bidding open *except when holding a bedrock minimum* Opening bid and poor distribution.

In Regulation suit Take-outs, the honour strength varies from *about* 1 to 3 plus honour-tricks, minimum and maximum, respectively.

With less, the hand should pass, save, possibly, where it contains a six-card suit.

With more, the hand should force, with the possible exception of a bare 4-3-3-3 distribution.

The fact that partner fails to make a Forcing Take-out conveys a valuable *negative inference*, which definitely places the hand below the line of $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. Nevertheless, it would be quite erroneous to jump to the hasty conclusion that, because partner has failed to force, one should renounce game or even a Slam. On the contrary, a great number of games (though fewer Slams) are reached by the road of non-Forcing bids, and the most serious objection to Forcing bids is the abuse most players make of this heavy artillery of Contract, dragging it, under the slightest provocation, to shoot a flock of sparrows. The writer, who originated the Forcing theory, always has a horror of Forc-

ing bids, considering them a necessary evil. As with a finesse, the most important thing to consider about a Forcing bid is how to avoid it. The chain of inferences forged through Regulation, non-Forcing bids is of a finer, more subtle and more precise type, because such inferences are developed naturally from partner's free responses or Rebids, and because they are illuminated by the fact that partner *may* pass and yet *refuses* to pass.

Examples of hands calling for Regulation non-Forcing Take-outs, assuming the Opening bid is one heart:

1. ♠ QJ 9 6 5 4 ♥ Q 4 3 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ 7
2. ♠ 10 5 3 ♥ 6 4 ♦ KJ 5 4 3 ♣ K 9 2
3. ♠ Q 9 6 4 ♥ 3 ♦ K 10 4 ♣ A KJ 9 8
4. ♠ A Q 9 8 6 ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ Q 6 ♣ A J 10
5. ♠ A 10 8 6 4 ♥ 7 3 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ 10 6 5
6. ♠ A K 10 4 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ K 5 4

In Example 5, change the five-card spade suit to a five-card diamond suit, requiring an Overcall of two, and the hand should be passed. In Example 6, a one spade bid is better than two no-trump. The hand contains $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks but a deplorable distribution.

JUMP TAKE-OUTS—NOT FORCING

A bid of two more than necessary to take out, as, for instance:

Opening Hand

1 ♥

Responding Hand

3 ♠

is not a Forcing bid, but shows a fairly strong suit with but little outside strength. It discloses a hand of a rigid type. Since the Responding Hand has no logical right to expect more than 3 tricks in support of his three spade bid, it indicates 6 playing-tricks, and the Opening Hand should raise to four if holding even a slight Rebid. With 7 playing-tricks, including 5 sure trump tricks, the bid should be four spades. Equally, if the Opening bid is one club, one diamond or one spade, and partner responds with four hearts, this is not a Forcing bid, but the Responding Hand's :

sage, which the Opening Hand should readily decode, reads:

'Partner, I am counting on you for the bare minimum shown by your Opening bid. I have a hand of a rigid type, not containing the honour-trick strength sufficient to justify a Forcing Take-out, but with which, in view of your bid, I believe game can be made. I have seven tricks.'

A DOUBLE JUMP REBID

A double Jump Take-out (player's first opportunity to bid) must not be confused with a double Jump Rebid (player's second opportunity to bid). A double Jump Rebid can take place only *after* some strength-showing bid by partner, be it a Jump no-trump or a Forcing suit Take-out.

A double Jump Rebid runs somewhat as follows:

SOUTH

1 ♥

4 ♥ (a double Jump Rebid)

NORTH

2 ♠

The double Jump Rebid is used to show a *six-card or longer trump suit that contains not more than one possible loser*.

In this manner, by giving a slightly unusual twist when responding to partner's strength-showing bids, it becomes possible to convey an inference that the trump suit is not merely a fair rebiddable suit but a practically solid suit containing at the maximum one loser. This inference is of particular importance to partner in considering a Small or a Grand Slam bid (see Slam Bids).

Experience has demonstrated to the author that many Slams are not bid because of the uncertainty regarding the trump suit; and that others, when bid, are not made, because an unnecessary gamble has been taken with the trump suit. This added inference or convention fully solves an otherwise annoying situation.

HOW TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A RAISE AND A TAKE-OUT

If there is a choice between a Raise and a Take-out, a Forcing Take-out should usually be preferred. If the choice is between a simple Take-out and a Jump Raise, a simple

Take-out in a higher-ranking suit should be preferred, but if the choice is between a simple Take-out in a lower ranking suit and a Jump Raise, the Jump Raise should be preferred. A simple Take-out, however, is always preferable to a single Raise, whether in a higher-ranking suit or not.

For example:

If the Opening bid is one heart, the Responding Hand should bid one spade or two diamonds in preference to a single heart Raise, but should bid three hearts in preference to a Take-out of two diamonds, the general principle being that responses which show the greater strength should be preferred.

'SIGN-OFF' OR 'RESCUE' BIDS

As a rule, every time a player speaks, his partner quite properly infers some added strength and is, in turn, often encouraged to bid further.

It is true that there are certain hands such as

♠ 9 8 7 5 4 3 ♥ 7 ♦ 10 8 3 2 ♣ 8 2

on which a player is sorely tempted to 'rescue' partner's one no-trump with a bid of two spades. Obviously, the hand is worthless at any bid except two spades, a contract which offers the hope of establishing 3 winners. The trouble with this bid is that partner has no means of distinguishing clearly between 'strength' and 'weakness', and with such hopeless hands the more the player bids the more his partner, whose hand is quite likely stronger than usual, is apt to rebid until they throw the cards in each other's faces. If on the other hand all Take-outs of two meant weakness, then the partnership would lose the benefit of 'strength inferences' on thousands of good hands—an even greater evil.

For this reason in the Culbertson System it is a fundamental principle that, with a few definite exceptions, every bid is an *encouraging* bid and that a pass is, as a rule, the only 'rescue'. The only exceptions occur in rare instances when *the 'rescue' inference is so clear that no possible misunderstanding can arise between partners*. Some of these 'rescue' situations arise after a Penalty Double of partner's suit bid of one, or after a

Penalty Double of a low contract by partner himself; others occur in a group of bids known as 'Sign-off' bids. A 'Sign-off' bid is a warning to partner that the hand, though previously bid, is below his minimum expectations in honour strength and that any further bidding by him is at his own risk and peril.

A 'Sign-off' bid is recognized by the fact that (a) the Responding Hand has bid and then rebid its suit *at least twice*; and, at the same time, (b) the 'Sign-off' bid is always in the range of *three-bids* in the suit.

'Sign-off' bids apply equally to major or minor suits and are generally made when responding to partner's no-trump, although they are also used after partner's suit bids. They are restricted to the Responding Hand.

The 'Sign-off' bid shows: One or less honour-trick in the hand and a six- or seven-card suit. It does not show less than about $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick except with an extraordinary freak or a seven-card suit; nor does it show a five-card suit. Hands that are too weak to rebid even once, without a serious penalty, should not be bid at all.

To illustrate:

SOUTH		NORTH
1 N T		2 ♠ (so far the inference is strength)
2 N T		3 ♠ (Sign-off!)
	or	
1 ♦		1 ♠
1 N T		2 ♠ (so far the inference is strength)
2 N T		3 ♠ (Sign-off!)

North warns partner that he holds something like

♠ K 10 8 6 4 2 ♥ 5 ♦ 9 8 7 4 ♣ 8 4

If North were stronger he would have bid either four spades or three no-trump over two no-trump, according to distribution. He also could have passed two no-trump. Similarly, with a minor suit 'Sign-off':

SOUTH		NORTH
1 ♠		2 ♦
2 ♥		3 ♦ (Sign-off!)

North shows something like

♠ 7 ♥ 8 ♦ QJ 10 9 8 5 4 ♣ Q 7 4 2

North, if strong, could have chosen either four diamonds or three no-trump, or raised one of partner's suits. He also could have passed. Hence the inference of a 'rescue' is quite clear.

It is important not to confuse the 'Sign-off' weakling with its brilliant brother—the Inferential Forcing Bid. See Chapter X on The Eight Forcing Situations.

RESPONDING WHEN THE OPENING BID IS ONE NO-TRUMP¹

The chief difference between Opening suit and no-trump bids is that with suit bids the honour strength is apt to be concentrated largely in the bid suit, while with no-trump, where a biddable suit is probably absent, the honour strength is more evenly distributed, thereby rendering the hand as a whole stronger defensively. It should be kept in mind, however, that even non-vulnerable no-trump bids on a bare 2½ honour-tricks are rare and that, when vulnerable, the no-trump Opening bid *promises at least 4 honour-tricks*.

NO-TRUMP AS A NEGATIVE RESPONSE

The one, two and three no-trump Take-outs are 'negative' or 'minimum' responses throughout the entire range of one or higher bids and responses. They usually convey an indirect inference denying either adequate trump support for the bid suit or important additional honour values in the hand, or both.

The negative one no-trump is used in responding to partner's Opening one-bid in a suit. (Opening one-bids, of course, are never Forcing.)

When Responding Hand bids one in a suit over partner's Opening one-bid—*One Over One*—if the Opening Hand is unable to rebid his own suit or raise partner's Take-out, and holds no other biddable suit and but slight values other than those previously shown, the proper response to the Take-out

¹ For further discussion of this subject, see pages 52, 53.

is one no-trump. Here it is a corollary to the Approach bids of one.

A negative (or 'bust') two no-trump is used in responding to partner's Opening two-bid in a suit. Here it is a corollary to the Forcing two-bid.

A negative three no-trump is used in responding to partner's Forcing Rebid or Forcing Take-out of three. Here it is a corollary to the Forcing Take-outs of three.

This highly characteristic use of minimum no-trump responses in the Approach-Forcing System, to flash a 'nothing new' signal and yet to keep the bidding open, is based upon the fact that no-trump bids do not *increase the original contract by a higher bid*. The bidding is therefore not crowded but, in accordance with the Approach principle, is kept as low as possible, allowing the partnership sufficient scope to 'veer and haul'. Needless to add, 'negative no-trump' bids are perfectly safe at all stages of bidding, because they are based upon strength previously shown by partner.

PIANISSIMO, FORTE AND FORTISSIMO

The following is a basic outline of the inferences in the Responding Hand:

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO OPENING ONE-BIDS

More than 90 per cent of Opening bids are one-bids. They include the range of hands varying from $2\frac{1}{2}$ up to 5 and sometimes $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. An Opening one-bid is a leap in the dark. The selection of any final bid will largely depend upon the distribution and balance of honour strength in the Responding Hand. Raises show a distribution favourable to partner's suit bids; responses with new suits generally deny it, except when made in minors. Finally, no-trump Take-outs deny, in many cases, both adequate trump support and a biddable suit in one's own hand.

In general, the bidding *tempo* is disclosed by the specific kind of responses, which show a greater or lesser number of honour-tricks and various distributional patterns. The 'pass' abandons all hope of game.

The 'no-game' or 'part-score', the 'near-game', and the

'game' inferences are conveyed in the following manner:

'No-game' inferences:

Simple non-Jump Raises and Take-outs, especially when the bidding goes *one spade, two clubs*, disclose a hand of average or fair honour strength, which varies between about 1 and 3 honour-tricks. These simple Raises and non-Jump Take-outs suggest the strong probability that game may not be available at any bid, unless the Opening Hand holds somewhat more than the $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks already disclosed.

'Near-game' inferences:

Jump Raises and Jump no-trump Take-outs are not Forcing bids, but strength-showing bids promising a game provided the Opening Hand has *slightly* more than a minimum. Here the password is 'probable game' and partner must, *as a rule*, try for game.

'Game' and 'Slam' inferences:

Jump responses of one more than necessary in a *new* suit are Forcing bids and show about $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. They are usually made below game, but with a part-score the Jump response forces partner to make some bid even if he has no more strength to show. Here the password is 'game' or a 'possible Slam'.

The intensity of tone—the various suit lengths that make up the partnership hands (distribution) and the minimum-maximum range of high cards held—is regulated through the lever of Forcing and non-Forcing responses. Accordingly, the duet is sung by the player and his partner either 'pianissimo' (for part-score) or 'forte' (for game) or 'fortissimo' (for Slams).

This network of simple but precise inferences built around one-bids and their responses, together with added inferences from two- and higher bids, successfully solves the underlying object of partnership language, which is to find, by means of legitimate deductions, the best bid from millions of unknown combinations. In Contract each deal is a fascinating detective mystery: the thought process is elimination and Plastic Valuation; the honour and distributional values furnish the 'clues' for the positive and negative inferences; and the best bid is the triumphant solution.

RESPONSES TO OPENING (FORCING) TWO-BIDS

The success of the Forcing two-bid depends entirely on correct responses.

The precise responses to the Forcing two-bid are as follows:

1. *Pass*—barred in all situations except temporarily when an opponent has overcalled. If an opponent overcalls an Opening bid of two in a suit, the Responding Hand may pass on a blank hand, as the Opening Hand is automatically assured of another chance to bid. However, an Overcall by an opponent never relieves either partner from the obligation *subsequently* to keep the bidding open until a game or a satisfactory penalty is reached.

2. *Two no-trump*—a blanket minimum response to denote a hand containing but 1 or less honour-trick, *which is made regardless of length of suits, strength of trumps or distribution.*

Any such response must indicate lack of more than 1 honour-trick, as playing-tricks can be shown on the next round.

To illustrate, assume an Opening bid of two spades and that the Responding Hand holds:

1. ♠ 5 3 2 ♥ K 7 6 5 4 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ Q 5
2. ♠ 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ K 5 4 2 ♦ 9 8 7 ♣ 3

With either of these hands the correct response to the Opening two spade bid is two no-trump in spite of the fact that the former has a six-card suit and the latter a fair Raise. Inasmuch as the bidding must be kept open until a game contract is reached, the Responding Hand will usually have an opportunity to show such values in a later round of bidding. This procedure is followed in order to safeguard partner against losing Slam attempts. The 'bust' two no-trump is called a *minimum response* because it is the lowest bid that can be made without increasing the contract.

3. *Three no-trump*—denies support in partner's bid suit, and also denies another biddable suit, but shows at least 1½ and not more than 2 plus honour-tricks.

The Culbertson Four-Five No-trump Slam convention

also applies to Forcing two-bids, but with the following modifications dictated by the logic of the situation (see Slam Bids): If the Responding Hand holds at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks (not necessarily Aces or a King) *he must bid four no-trump*—at once if holding no Raise or biddable suit, or eventually in any event. The *five no-trump* is used by the Responding Hand only as a response to the Opening bidder's four no-trump signal, and *shows two Aces*. Both the four and five no-trump bids are Forcing.

If the Responding Hand holds but 2 honour-tricks, the partnership hands account for at least 7 honour-tricks, leaving for the opponents an Ace, a King and a Queen, even if the Opening two-bid has been made on a minimum. If the Opening Hand holds but slight additional values, a Small Slam is definitely in sight, (at what bid will depend on distribution). Consequently, if the Opening Hand *continues* the bidding after partner's *three no-trump* response, the Responding Hand should carefully reconsider the possibility of a Slam.

4. Raises of two-bids are quite distinct from Raises of one-bids.

One Raise shows 1 plus honour-trick *in addition to adequate trumps* (at least Q 3 2, or four small).

Two Raises show (a) *slightly better* than adequate trump support—four trumps headed by a Knave or three trumps headed by a King; and (b) 2 honour-tricks outside, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick and a singleton. Ace or two honours in the trump suit will proportionately enhance the value of the hand.

With better than adequate trump support, and between $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 honour-tricks, at least a Small Slam is definitely in sight, subject to favourable distribution.

When more than one Raise is available, the hand need not be jumped the full amount of Raises. It will probably be more advantageous temporarily to mislead partner by giving but one Raise in order to determine from his Rebid whether his two-bid is a 'minimum' or a strong two-bid.

5. *Suit Take-outs*—are made on any biddable suit, provided

the hand contains at least 1 plus honour-tricks. *Suit Take-outs must never be jumped until a game bid is reached, but should be bid gradually.*¹ The only possible exception is a six-card or longer suit containing at least 5 sure trump winners.

To illustrate:

The Opening Hand

♠ A K J 9
♥ 4 2
♦ A K Q 8 6
♣ K Q

The Responding Hand

♠ Q 10 3 2
♥ A K 9 8 6 5
♦ —
♣ 10 9 6

The bidding should proceed as follows:

The Opening Hand

2♦
2♠
3 N T (has already shown
all he has)

The Responding Hand

2♥! (not 4 or 5♥)
3♥ (a Rebid)
6♠

No bid

The Responding Hand, who at first sight has a likely Grand Slam bid in spades, decides to leave the decision to partner after depicting for him a hand of unusual strength. The clue here is the three no-trump minimum response of the Opening Hand.

Since both partners must always keep the bidding open when below game, it is to their obvious advantage not to crowd each other. The same principle—'once Forcing, always Forcing'—applies to the Opening Hand even after the 'bust' two no-trump response.

Analysed examples of all Opening bids and Responses

¹ In response to Opening bids of two, it is advisable to show a shaded five-card suit whenever the hand contains slightly more than 1 honour-trick. For instance, either Q 10 4 3 2 or J 10 4 3 2 is a safe Take-out of an Opening two-bid if the hand contains a side honour-trick. If, however, it is necessary to count the top honour in the shaded suit as part of the honour-trick, a two no-trump response is to be preferred, since then the hand is an absolute minimum, and the failure to make the weakest bid possible may unduly encourage partner.

will be found in the Illustrated Summary of the Responding Hand, Chapter XIII.

FREE AND SEMI-FORCING BIDS

After the First Hand has opened the bidding with one in a suit, the Responding Hand is generally expected to keep the bidding open if he has any excuse at all for doing so. Such a response might be called a 'semi-Forcing' bid because, for tactical reasons, it is made to give partner an opportunity to rebid. For instance, with an Opening bid of one spade and a pass by Second Hand, a bid of two spades would be made on as weak a hand as the following:

♠ J 9 7 6 ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ K 8 7 3 ♣ 8 4

This type of bid should never be read by partner as showing any great strength.

A free Raise is made after an intervening bid by Second Hand. A free Raise, therefore, is a definite indication of at least the required amount of strength with no shadings. For example, with the above holding, Third Hand would pass if Second Hand had overcalled the one spade bid, with, say, two clubs, and make only a secondary Raise should partner show added strength by his free Rebid.

This principle applies not only to Raises but to bids of any kind; in fact, a one no-trump bid over an opponent's Overcall of partner's suit bid of one would show almost the strength required to bid two no-trump without an intervening bid. This also applies to the Opening bidder. Suppose that he opens the bidding with one heart and receives a three heart Response from partner, who is Third Hand. If his hand is almost a minimum, he would still bid four hearts when the bidding came back to him. If Fourth Hand, however, suddenly overcalls with four clubs, his proper declaration is a pass, as then his partner has a perfectly good opportunity to bid again. This important principle may be stated as follows: *Weak or doubtful Raises or Take-outs, in response to either partner's suit bids of one, are reasonably safe whenever there is an inference that such responses are influenced by the necessity of keeping the bidding open; that is, whenever either opponent passes,*

and therefore a pass by partner may close the bidding. The same doubtful Raises and Take-outs lead to disaster when an opponent overcalls, and the player has therefore the logical right to assume that his partner's responses show strength—otherwise, why should he bid? Especially when opponents bid with their part-score, it is important to refrain from doubtful encouragement to partner, who is already over-excited by the same part-score. Doubtful bids are justified only when necessary to keep the bidding open at a low stage, or when partner has given an unmistakable inference that his hand is strong.

Strangely enough this principle is generally reversed even by an average player. Holding a weak hand though having some support for partner, he passes even though the opponents do not bid; but if Second Hand overcalls, he probably gives the Raise immediately, forgetting that this bid must, of necessity, be interpreted by partner as a strong bid. As a result, many winning hands are dropped before game is reached, and weak hands are vigorously pushed to disastrous penalties.

SEMI-FORCED RESPONSES TO ONE-BIDS WITH A PART-SCORE

When the partnership has a part-score, a response to an Opening bid of one is 'semi-forced', first to give partner another chance to bid, and second, if need be, to conceal the weakness of the hand. Thus, with a part-score, after partner has opened the bidding with one spade, a Raise to two spades is justified on no more than:

♠ 9 8 5 4 ♥ 9 6 ♦ Q 5 3 2 ♣ J 8 7

It follows, therefore, that a Take-out with one no-trump should be made on considerably shaded strength. If partner has bid one spade, under these conditions, the Responding Hand should take out, holding:

♠ 9 6 5 ♥ Q 10 3 2 ♦ Q J 5 4 ♣ 8 7

A corollary of this principle is that when partner has opened the bidding with a part-score and the Responding Hand holds unusual honour and distributional strength, the bidding should be kept low until there is further opportunity to exchange information as to suit lengths and honour strength. If Responding Hand has great strength, game is certain and a Slam possible. When lacking sufficient honour-tricks to justify a Forcing Take-out, bidding should be so controlled as to facilitate exchange of information below game contract.

An example of Slam bidding with a part-score is given on p. 432.

CHAPTER XII

THE ONE OVER ONE

THE CONFUSION of a great many meaningless generalities has muddled the entire subject of 'One Over One' bids. Even the meaning of the phrase 'One Over One' has become mysteriously vague, so that now there are almost as many One Over One 'Systems' as there are players. Some of these 'One Over Ones' are so complicated (quite unnecessarily) as to constitute almost a private convention, especially against strangers in tournaments. Most of them are adaptable only to the highly artificial Howell form of scoring the innumerable 'Championships' in Duplicate, and in rubber Bridge are often disastrous. It will be obvious to any student of the game that all these so-called 'systems' are nothing but more or less radical variations of the Culbertson Approach-Forcing System.¹

The very name 'One Over One' was coined by Mr. Theodore A. Lightner, my associate and one of the five or six truly great analysts and master players of to-day. In his

¹ Before the publication of *The Bridge World Magazine* (edited by the author) in 1929 and *Contract Bridge Blue Book* in 1930, One Over One 'Systems' had not even been heard of. Since then all but a few writers have adopted the Culbertson System under one name or another, and several have suggested variations under the guise of a 'new' system. Practically all such variations and 'latest innovations' have been carefully tested by the author and his associates. Those which are worth while have been incorporated and proper credits given; others, that proved to be unsound or impracticable from the standpoint of *expert play*, have been discarded, however attractive they may seem to the beginner. The world-wide technical organization behind the Culbertson System not only includes all but a few of the greatest players and analysts, but receives suggestions from advanced players in all parts of the world, and then tests them theoretically and practically.

book for advanced players, entitled 'High Lights of the Culbertson System', Mr. Lightner states:

"To use this catchy name "One Over One" to characterize an entire system, as is being done by certain writers, is simply an attempt to convey a false impression that there are two distinct Systems, one called the Culbertson (Approach-Forcing) and the other the so-called "One Over One". Inasmuch as it happens to be I who originated the name and the Forcing variation "One Over One", the absurdity of such claims is all the more apparent."

In a general sense the words 'One Over One' simply mean that, in order better to disclose information on strength and distribution of partnership hands, the bidding should, *whenever possible*, be kept within the range of suit bids and responses of one. As a result, the bidding is kept low and overcrowding of inferences is avoided. This is exactly what this writer has fought for, almost single-handed, since the year 1922, the time when the no-trump ruled supreme and modern Distribution was unknown. This principle gave its name to the author's *Approach System of Auction*. There would be no need to mention all this if it were not for the truth that too many authors and publishers, in their wholly natural and highly laudable desire to publish new books on Bridge, hopelessly confuse all players by putting out their own version of the Culbertson System under some high-sounding name. It is usually claimed for the 'new system' that it is being played by the greatest experts. As a matter of fact, few great experts play *entirely* another player's system, and practically all known master players have repeatedly recog-

It goes without saying that not a single method or idea is accepted or rejected for the Culbertson System which has not been previously proved through the acid test of rubber Bridge, and that the final criterion of any method is its performance in *expert play against the strongest kind of opposition*. It is a remarkable fact that most of these improvements and suggestions do not come from the experts in New York, many of whom, believing themselves to be perfect, really never change, but from the great class of keen analysts outside New York.

nized that their methods are very largely based on *Contract Bridge Blue Book*.

'One Over One' is simply another name for *Approaching*, which is one of the basic principles of the Culbertson System and which to-day forms part of any system, be it the Vanderbilt, the Official or the 'Never Slip' System.

In its technical and more specific sense the 'One Over One' is not a system at all, but a procedure or method of responding to partner's suit bids of one, which also is highly characteristic of the Culbertson System, and which was also originally developed and published by this author under the name 'Forcing One Over One' five years ago, and subsequently amended in favour of the more scientific Part-Forcing One Over One.

A 'One Over One' situation occurs when a player opens with a bid of one in a suit and his partner responds with a bid of one in another suit, or when partner responds with a bid of one in a suit and the Opening bidder makes still another response with a bid of one in a suit. For instance, assuming that opponents always pass, all the bids in the following situation are One Over One (South opens):

SOUTH

1 ♣
1 ♥

NORTH

1 ♦
1 ♠

A one no-trump response closes the chain of One Over One bids.

In connection with this bidding situation, there arises the important problem of how best to fit in partner's responses so as to obtain the maximum information and yet keep the bidding low enough. Inferences in partnership bidding can be compared to a telegraphic code of dots and dashes. In telegraphy, the underlying principle is terse *economy* of words; in Bridge, it is economy of bids that counts. The waste of even a single round of bidding may easily shut out valuable information as to the peculiarities of a hand by crowding out a number of important inferences.

A system, or a player, that uses the least number of rounds of bidding compatible with clarity, will doubtless be superior

to some other system or player that does not fully take into account this fundamental principle of *economy*.¹

Considering that subsequent rounds of bidding are largely controlled by Opening bids and responses, it is of the utmost importance to develop proper methods of suit bids and responses of one. The reader is already acquainted with the essentials of the Approach principle in suit bids of one and their responses. It is important, however, to analyse in greater detail the two solutions of the Approach or 'One Over One' problem—the oldest and the latest—for both form an integral part of the Culbertson (Approach-Forcing) System. There are, accordingly, two interpretations of 'One Over One' bids:

1. The *Forcing* One Over One bids. (Now obsolete.)
2. The *part-Forcing* One Over One bids. (New.)

The *Forcing* response of one is still being used by many Culbertson players, and is optional in the Culbertson System; the *part-Forcing* one-bids represent the latest and more scientific solution, and are now used by the great majority of advanced players. The present scoring and Grand Slam premiums render the Forcing One Over One even more disadvantageous. In both kinds—Forcing and part-Forcing—the object is to prevent the unnecessary crowding of bidding by keeping partner's responses within suit responses of one; that is, as low as possible. Naturally the player who is urged to respond with a low bid must in turn be guaranteed that if he should hold a strong hand the bidding will not die short of a possible game. The difference between the

¹ Approach methods were scientifically analysed in 1922 as a corollary to this fundamental principle of economy in bidding. These methods form a logically connected whole, and include the modern four-card suit bids, the new and revolutionary requirements of trump support, the decided preference that an Opening one-bid or responses be in a suit instead of at no-trump, the marked reluctance to start the bidding higher than one, the 'negative no-trump', and, in Contract Bridge, the series of Forcing bids. The ability to pack the maximum amount of information within the minimum number of rounds of bidding is the final test of any player or system.

Forcing and the part-Forcing (free) One Over One is that the former requires *unconditionally that all suit responses of one* call for another bid from partner; while the latter allows the Opening bidder to drop his partner's response of one in a suit on a type of hand that contains a bedrock minimum and lacks even an added Queen or favourable distribution. Consequently, the former is unconditionally Forcing, and the latter leaves an option of passing on minimum hands.

If, for instance, I open the bidding with one heart and my partner responds with one spade, his response is unconditionally Forcing, in the Forcing One Over One; that is, I must bid again regardless of whether my Opening bid contains additional values or not; but in the part-Forcing (free) Overcall, I may *occasionally* drop the bidding. The word 'occasionally' is used here advisedly, for even with the part-Forcing One Over One method, partners are practically always required to keep the bidding open. For instance, if the Opening bidder bids one heart holding:

♠ 9 6 5 ♥ A Q 10 2 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ 10 8 4

and partner responds with one spade, the Opening bidder may drop the bidding. Substitute ♣ Q, however, for the ♣ 10, and the Opening bidder must now give another chance—in this case, by bidding one no-trump. Thus the Forcing One Over One allows no exception, but the part-Forcing One Over One permits exceptions, though only in the rarest instances: it is 99.44 per cent Forcing.

This apparently insignificant difference leads in practice to a totally different development of bids according to whether the player uses the Forcing or part-Forcing One Over One, and, although the final results are in most cases the same, the roads by which the final bid is reached are often quite different. The reason for such momentous results from such a small difference is this: If a suit response of one is *unconditionally* Forcing, then a player may permit himself the luxury of responding with bids of one even on hands of extraordinary strength. If I should hold:

♠ A J 10 7 4 3 ♥ A ♦ A K Q 9 4 3 ♣ —

and my partner has opened with one heart, I can respond in

perfect safety with one spade since, willy-nilly, he must bid again at least once. Should he bid, for instance, one no-trump, I could jump to three diamonds and force him again. With the part-Forcing One Over One, the situation is radically different. With very strong hands ($3\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks), the Responding Hand must jump the bid, since the response of One Over One may be left in. With the preceding hand I could not afford to bid one spade, for my partner might pass, should his Opening bid prove to be a minimum, and leave me in the lurch. My proper response here would be two spades at once over partner's Opening one heart, also forcing him to bid again.

As already stated, the Forcing One Over One method was introduced by the author for the first time in Bridge, in the *Auction Bridge Magazine* (December, 1928) under the title, 'The Paradox of the Forcing Bid'. It then formed part of the Culbertson System and, together with the Forcing Jump Take-out and Forcing Two-Bid, made up the trio of principal Forcing bids. There was a good reason then for making One Over One bids Forcing in spite of their technical handicaps and superfluous complications.

When players had learned the proper use of the Approach principle, the urgent reason for the Forcing (Approach) One Over One responses existed no longer. Accordingly, the Forcing One Over One was abandoned in 1930 in favour of the more scientific part-Forcing One Over One, which, from the standpoint of championship and advanced play, is far more flexible, precise and telling. However, a number of students of the Culbertson System are still using the old method and the Forcing One Over One has been left in as an optional bid for those who are more accustomed to its use. It may still serve its purpose with a beginner, who knows only black and white.

HOW TO USE THE (PART-FORCING) ONE OVER ONE (Approach Principle)

For the convenience of the reader, some of the previously explained principles are here summarized.

Assuming that a player makes an Opening bid of one club (or any other suit bid of one), and the opponents pass, the subsequent procedure is as follows:

1. *The Responding Hand should endeavour to keep the bidding open even with as little as a biddable suit if there is one honour-trick in the hand*, or, when no-trump is the response, with one plus honour-tricks. Only a practically blank hand justifies a pass over partner's Opening suit bid of one, whether one is vulnerable or not. Exceptionally, a six-card major suit, headed by a King or Queen-Knave, should be shown even with no outside strength.¹

However, with a hand such as

♠ 7 6 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ A 10 9 7 4 ♣ 10 8 5

one diamond is the proper response to partner's Opening bid of one club, but a pass is preferable if partner's Opening bid is, say, one spade.

With a hand such as

♠ 7 4 ♥ Q 7 5 4 3 ♦ K 10 4 ♣ Q 6 2

a one no-trump response is to be preferred to bidding two hearts over partner's one spade bid. A no-trump or suit Take-out, however weak, should not be confused with a so-called 'rescue'. Thus, if partner opens with one spade and you hold:

♠ 2 ♥ Q 9 7 4 ♦ J 9 4 3 ♣ 8 6 4 3

the best way out is to pass and hope the lightning will not strike. To 'rescue' with one no-trump, simply because you have a singleton in your partner's suit, is about as neat a way of committing Bridge *hara-kiri* as I know of. Perhaps the most valuable principle in Bridge is this: 'Leave bad enough alone.'

2. *After partner responds with a suit bid of one, the Opening Hand must bid again, except when his hand is a bedrock minimum Opening bid.* Even a Queen added to the minimum of 2½ honour-tricks, or a slightly better distribution (usually other than

¹ Such a weak bid is protected by a Sign-off bid (see Sign-off bids in Chapter XIII on 'The Responding Hand').

4-3-3-3), compels the keeping open of the bidding. For instance, if the Opening bidder holds:

♠ 10 5 2 ♥ 10 7 5 ♦ A K 7 4 ♣ K 10 3

and bids one diamond, and his partner responds with one spade, the Opening bidder may pass, but with ♣ A instead of ♣ K, or even ♥ Q, or a better distribution, the Opening bidder should respond with one no-trump. *This principle is in force so long as the bidding remains within the range of one-bids.*

In rare instances, the Opening Hand fails to keep the One Over One bidding open. This option, of passing after partner's response of one, permits the use of a number of minimum Opening bids for defensive purposes, which would not be possible under the absolutely Forcing 'One Over One'.

3. *A suit response of one to partner's Opening one-bid shows, as a rule, not more than 3 plus honour-tricks.* For instance, if South opens with one heart and North responds with one spade, North's minimum may be about 1 honour-trick in the hand, and his maximum something like this:

♠ A K 10 5 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ K 4 3

There is no necessity to jump or force even with a hand of such strength. If the Opening bidder passes after one spade, he must hold a bedrock minimum, something like this:

♠ 8 4 2 ♥ A Q 7 3 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ A 5 4

With such a hand, game is highly problematical. With the slightest additional value in the Opening bidder's hand, the bidding will be kept open by him, and the Responding Hand can subsequently make a Jump Rebid to show game strength. Substitute ♦ K for ♦ 10 or ♥ K for ♥ 5 in North's hand and his response becomes two spades in spite of the four-card spade suit.

Hands containing a bare $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and 4-3-3-3 distribution should, as a rule, justify only a One Over One response rather than a Jump Response.

4. *When a hand contains $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks including a biddable suit the response to partner's Opening one-bid must not be one in a suit, but a Jump Take-out of two.* Thus (South opens):

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

2 ♠!

The inference is that North holds something like this (or better):

♠ A K 7 4 3 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A 9 ♣ K 10 5 2

As a rule, North shows a *minimum* of $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the hand, and a five-card or longer suit. He may hold even a four-card suit, but he must then have a minimum of 4 honour-tricks. A count of $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks together with Opening bidder's $2\frac{1}{2}$ practically guarantees a game, and, if either hand contains added values, a Slam is in sight. Had North responded with one spade or two diamonds, the minimum might have been as low as $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick (with a six-card suit), but the maximum not higher than about 3 honour-tricks. (See the Forcing One Over One.)

When a trump suit is practically solid (contains not more than one possible loser) a Jump Take-out can be made on but 3 + honour-tricks, but never on less.

The scale of inferences in the Culbertson One Over One is as follows (South opens):

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

1 ♠¹or 2 ♠²or 3 ♠³or 4 ♠⁴

¹ A one spade response shows a biddable suit, and from about 1 to 3 honour-tricks.

² A two spade response is a Forcing Take-out, and shows at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks or more.

³ A three spade response (a double Jump) shows but little or no outside strength and about 6 playing-tricks, with the expectation of about 3 tricks in partner's hand.

⁴ A four spade response shows between $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 3+ honour-tricks and about 7 playing-tricks, with the expectation of about 3 tricks in partner's hand.

THE UNCONDITIONALLY FORCING ONE OVER ONE

• (Approach Principle)

Many players who adopted the Culbertson System in

1927-28 are still using the unconditional or Forcing One Over One chain of responses; therefore, in spite of its serious disadvantages from the standpoint of expert play, this method still forms part of the Culbertson System of 1933 as an alternative or optional method to the new (part-Forcing) One Over One.

The same procedure as with the part-Forcing One Over One applies to the unconditionally Forcing One Over One, with this important exception:

The Opening bidder may not pass partner's original suit response (not the Opening bid) of one. The only exception occurs when partner has previously passed. For instance, if the bidding¹ is (South opens):

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

1 ♠

the one spade response is *Forcing*, and South must bid again at least once. *It follows that North can in all safety respond with a low bid of one in a suit, regardless of how strong his hand may be, unless South had previously passed.* Theoretically, North may hold as little as

♠ K 8 7 4 3 2 ♥ 5 4 ♦ 5 4 3 2 ♣ 2

or as much as thirteen spades, and still respond with a bid of one spade. In the part-Forcing One Over One, when a player holds a powerful hand he should jump, for the Opening bidder has the option of passing with a bare minimum, and a game or even a Slam may be missed. When the Forcing response of one is used, no such fear exists, and the Responding Hand invariably responds with a one-bid unless the Opening bid is one spade and two in any other suit is required to overcall, or partner has previously passed. If the bidding goes (South opens):

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

1 ♠

South does not know *as yet* whether North's hand is average, fair or powerful. This will be shown on the second round of bidding. For instance (South opens):

¹ In all these examples it is assumed that the opponents always pass.

SOUTH

1 ♥

1 N T

NORTH

1 ♠

No bid¹or 2 ♠²or 3 ♠³

¹ One no-trump terminates the chain of Forcing responses of one, and a pass by North indicates a minimum hand.

² Two spades shows a fair hand, but usually below 3½ honour-tricks in strength.

³ Three spades is again a Forcing bid, in spite of the fact that it is in the same suit and South must bid again. This is a new artificial convention without which the Forcing response of one cannot be used. North shows at least 3½ honour-tricks and a good spade suit.

In the part-Forcing One Over One, the bidding situation with average and fair hands (cases 1 and 2 above) is identical, but in the last case (3), where North's hand is strong enough to force after South's one no-trump, the Force takes place one round sooner. Thus:

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

2 ♠!

There are several disadvantages to the Forcing One Over One, besides the fact that the bid is too complicated, and quite unnecessarily so, for all players but the type who likes to startle his unfortunate partner out of his wits or believes that, to be good, a thing must be diabolically complicated. The bid is too vague, since partner does not know just where he stands even after a Force. Requirements for Opening bids of one must obviously be made much stronger. As a result, minimum Opening bids, which are most effective in defensive bidding, must be given up.

One of the principal disadvantages of the Forcing One Over One lies in the very fact that a Forcing response deprives the partnership of the benefit of additional and more precise inferences which, if the response were *free*, would not be shut out. When developing the Forcing principle, the author's conception has always been that a Forcing bid is at best a necessary evil, and that its use is justified only when

the risk that partner may pass a makable game or Slam is too great. As with finesses, the most important consideration about a Forcing bid is how to avoid it. The Forcing One Over One is a futile, superfluous bid, because another Forcing bid (a Jump Overcall of two) is readily available, and at an equally low stage of bidding.

In Bridge, as in life, it is usually best to let nature take its course, and cards have an inner logic all their own: they will best serve their master when forced the least. When a player is unconditionally forced to respond, his bids are necessarily rigid and limited in scope. A pass, the most eloquent of all calls, is no longer available. The fact, that a player may freely choose between the alternative of passing and bidding, forms the keystone for a series of delicately shaded bids, in which the inferences deal not with full tricks but with mere 'plus' values, a stray Queen or a more appetizing distributional pattern. This 'twilight zone' of bidding, in which Rebid values are finely chiselled out, is blotted out under axe-like Forcing. To illustrate (South opens):

Part-Forcing One Over One

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♦	1 ♥
1 N T ¹	3 ♥ ²
3 N T ³	No bid

¹ One no-trump is a definite Rebid, however slight. Since the Opening bidder has the option of passing if he holds a bare minimum, the inference from his one no-trump is that he has at least slightly more than a bare 2½ honour-tricks. In addition, the option of passing enables the Opening bidder to make minimum defensive bids.

² The three heart bid, although an urgent invitation, is not a Force—otherwise North would have either Forced with two hearts the first time, or bid four hearts the second time. A number of finely shaded hands are ideally suited for just such a situation; partner is expected to choose between a four heart and a three no-trump bid, but he *may also pass* for a part-score, if his hand is an apparent misfit. Such bidding situations are common, and yet they are eliminated when a Forcing One Over One is used.

⁸ The one no-trump response has already shown at least a slight plus value. Three no-trump now shows at least a better distribution.

In this manner fair hands requiring such delicate treatment that partners must advance with caution are dealt with through optional Rebids; strong hands are reserved for the immediate Jump; and minimum hands are protected by the option of passing. An even more serious disadvantage of the Forcing One Over One is that it requires several important changes in related methods of bidding which result in cumbersome, top-heavy and superfluous complications.

To illustrate (South opens):

SOUTH
1 ♦¹
1 N T

NORTH
1 ♥ (Forcing)²

¹ The Opening Hand must increase its requirements for Opening one-bids, and definitely renounce all *defensive* Opening bids. South should hold not $2\frac{1}{2}$ but at least 3 and even more honour-tricks. Considering that North may respond with a very weak hand, and that South has no option of passing, it would be extremely dangerous to open the bidding on minimum hands and be doubled for penalties. As a result of the Forcing One Over One, minimum Opening bids, which are Contract's ideal defensive bids, are practically eliminated, for the requirement to open becomes not $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 but 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks! The efficacy of defensive tactics is largely nullified, for there is not much need of defence on hands containing 3 or more honour-tricks. It is the valuable hands, which though above the average in honour values are so weak that they could not in any event be bid higher than one, that are eliminated from bidding entirely. The common range of hands varying from a shaded $2\frac{1}{2}$ to a bare 3 honour-tricks are the most effective for defence and, if not bid immediately, at least to indicate a lead, can rarely be shown later. Not only that. Failure to open with hands ranging from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 plus honour-tricks will frequently cause the loss of a game unless the requirements for Fourth Hand bids are radically lowered. To circumvent this result of the Forcing One Over One, some writers naively advocate that, when First or Second Hand, a player should pass many of his better than average hands, but, when last to speak, he should open on average and even below average hands. This is the most

idiotic advice I have ever heard. When a player has a chance to chuck his weak hand joyfully into the discard, he decides to open battle in the face of mathematical odds against him! It will suffice for an alert Third Hand opponent to lay a trap by passing, in turn, a strong hand. The Fourth Hand, who, as a rule, holds something, opens the bidding only to find partner holding a weak hand and then the fun begins. It will be like shooting fishes in a bathtub.

² After South's Opening bid of one diamond, North's Forcing response of one heart may show anything from a weak hand to a 'power house'. This is a serious handicap, for subsequent bidding must necessarily be somewhat vague, and among other things the precise bidding of Grand Slams becomes practically impossible.

For instance, with the Forcing One Over One (South opens):

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♦	1 ♥
1 N T	3 ♥?

It is never quite clear to South whether North's bid of three hearts shows a really good rebiddable heart suit or is used because it is the only way to force South again. Consequently, South will often be put to a hard guess in his later bidding. With the part-Forcing One Over One, the situation is not befogged, thus (South opens):

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♦	2 ♥!
2 N T	3 ♥!!

Three hearts is a clear-cut Rebid, since North could have chosen three no-trump instead of three hearts. In addition, it draws a sharp line of demarcation between hands containing a *maximum* of 3 plus honour-tricks (a response of one heart to one diamond) and a *minimum* of $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks (a Forcing response of two hearts to one diamond). This precision of inferences is of especial value in Small and Grand Slam bidding.

Certain of my friends point out that the Forcing One Over One, by concealing unusual strength behind a response of one, would produce more penalties from the Third Hand player than an immediate Jump. This holds true only for a

very small number of hands, for it is quite unlikely that the opponents could bid against the combined strength of between 6 and 7 honour-tricks indicated by a Jump Take-out. With the range of 3 plus honour-tricks for a response of one, the part-Forcing method captures all the profitable penalties that the Forcing One Over One secures; as for stronger hands, if the opponents venture a bid they will hold, as a rule, a tremendous freak.

Furthermore, it often happens that a Penalty Double by the Responding Hand offers a losing guess to the Opening Hand, for the very reason that partner fails to jump when strong. Since the Responding Hand bids only one heart over one diamond, its subsequent Penalty Double may be made on great honour strength, or it may be made on trump-trick strength and little honour value. This guess is avoided with the more precise inference on honour values in the part-Forcing response. Again, in many instances the Forcing One Over One, by keeping the bidding too low when not necessary, will enable the Fourth Hand opponent to place a profitable lead-directing Overcall. Here the situation has the same serious disadvantage as in the Vanderbilt Combination System after a Forcing diamond response. An Overcall shuts off the communication between partners, and thereafter the *Opening Hand is forced to guess (more or less wildly) the strength and distribution of the Responding Hand*. With a part-Forcing One Over One the Opening Hand is in a position to distinguish immediately between hands containing *not more than 3 plus honour-tricks (response of one)* and *not less than 3½ honour-tricks (Jump response of two)*.

THE GREATEST FALLACY IN THE HISTORY OF BRIDGE

At present several variations of Culbertson (Approach-Forcing) principles have cropped up under the name 'One Over One'. Thus we have the 'Reith' One Over One, the 'Sims-Kerwin' One Over One, the 'Burnstine' One Over One, the 'Silz' One Over One, etc., etc. However sharply the various One Over One authors may differ on their other methods, all unanimously agree in basing their 'systems'

entirely on the *Forcing One Over One* response. They willingly grant that the *Forcing One Over One* has many disadvantages, and is extremely heavy and complicated.¹ All players, experts or average, are slow to recognize a bid which is *Forcing*, though it is not a *Jump*, and which may show anything from a practically blank hand to thirteen spades. They maintain that these complications are *necessary because the Forcing One Over One saves one or more rounds in bidding*, which is, of course, of paramount importance. To quote from Mr. Sims's so-called *Money Contract*, first edition (page 57)—the italics are mine:

'The principal advantage of the *One Over One* response, therefore, is that it permits partners to make *one, two or even three additional responses on strong hands*, which could not possibly be made in any system calling for immediate *Jump Forcing* bids to guard against a premature pass. Thus, a one spade *Overcall* of an original one heart bid insures the continuance of the bidding just as surely as would a two spade *Overcall*—and at a lower level!'

If it is correct that the *Forced One Over One* response with strong hands results in keeping the bidding lower by even a *single* round, then it must be admitted that there is a great deal to say in favour of a *Forced* response. On the other hand, if a *Forcing One Over One actually fails to save even a single round*, then its principal premise falls to pieces, and, consequently, the so-called *One Over One* 'Systems' lose their principal justification because they are based on a fallacy. It would then not be necessary to resort to artificial, cumbersome and highly complicated methods, when a simpler and more scientific way is available.

At first glance, the following bidding (South opens):

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

1 ♠

does *seem* to save a round, as against the bidding:

SOUTH

1 ♥

NORTH

2 ♠

¹ As every good teacher knows, the *Forcing One Over One* is

This is, however, one of those remarkable logical illusions to which some of the greatest players and writers (many of whom are associated with the author in the development of the Culbertson System) have fallen victims. From the standpoint of keeping the bidding low and of saving one or more rounds, there is not the slightest difference between the Forcing and the part-Forcing One Over One! Take the following typical bidding situation (South opens):

EXAMPLE 1*Forcing One Over One*

SOUTH
 1 ♥
 1 N T
 3 N T

NORTH
 1 ♠ (Forcing)
 3 ♠ (Forcing to game)

EXAMPLE 2*Part-Forcing One Over One*

SOUTH
 1 ♥
 2 N T
 3 N T

NORTH
 2 ♠! (Forcing to game)
 3 ♠

In Example 1 the Forcing response of one produced 1 bid in hearts, 2 bids in spades and 2 bids in no-trump, *the final bid being a three-bid*. In Example 2, the *part-Forcing* method produced 1 bid in hearts, 2 bids in spades and 2 bids in no-trump, *the final bid being a three-bid*. An identical number of bids terminates identically in the final round. In neither example was there a saving of a single round or of a single bid.

Take another instance, which is apparently the best example of the Forcing One Over One (South opens):

so complicated and at the same time so vague that it is practically unteachable. This is also a serious disadvantage in expert play. As a rule, the greater the experts the simpler their methods. The true stamp of a routine theorist is excessive complication of his theories.

EXAMPLE 3

Forcing One Over One

SOUTH

1 ♣

1 ♥

1 N T

3 N T

(or 3 of any
other suit)

NORTH

1 ♦ (Forcing)

1 ♠ (Forcing)

3 ♦ (Forcing to game)

EXAMPLE 4

Part-Forcing One Over One

SOUTH

1 ♣

2 ♥

2 N T

3 N T

NORTH

2 ♦ ! (Forcing to game)

2 ♠

3 ♦

Here again not a single round or a single bid is saved through either method of bidding. In both examples the no-trump is bid twice, and the diamond suit is also bid twice, while other suits are bid once. *It is impossible to make up, even artificially, a single hand in which the saving of a bid or a response could be effected through the Forcing One Over One.* The reason for this extraordinary 'optical' illusion is that the writers (and many players) failed to realize that the gain of one round of bidding after a Forcing One response is only temporary, and is lost again on the third round.

From the standpoint of *total rounds for game*, it does not matter whether the Force is applied on the first, on the second, or on the third round. The bidding is also identical, of course, with other types of hands which are not strong enough for a Force.

This fallacy, that a Forcing One Over One 'saves' one or more rounds of bidding is, in my opinion, the most remarkable fallacy in the history of Bridge—except the fallacy that four-card suits should not be bid because (it was believed) they are too short to stand a ruff. A number of books have been produced, at great cost and labour, which are based on

the One Over One fallacy, and devote many pages to the detailed explanation of how to make the best use of time 'saved' on rounds of bidding. In the Sims-Kerwin One Over One 'System' the enthusiasm of its authors carried them to such heights as to claim the saving of not less than 'three additional responses'. It is an interesting example of mass psychology when even intelligent people fall victims to a mirage of logic. It is difficult to imagine that writers who specialize in Bridge, many of whom are expert players, should publish books and build their entire 'systems' on a premise which is so manifestly fallacious and absurd. Obviously, if the Forcing One Over One does not actually convey a single added inference, the principal reason for using it and a number of devilishly complicated bids built around it, disappears.

The increased premiums for Grand Slams have dealt a deathblow to the Forcing One Over One. It is now, more than ever before, necessary to distinguish immediately and precisely between hands containing 3 plus or fewer honour-tricks (the 3 plus response of one) and those containing at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks (the Jump response of two over one), as well as the varying degrees of strength shown through subsequent Rebids. Under these conditions, the Forcing One Over One becomes completely superfluous.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LANGUAGE OF INFERENCES IN THE RESPONDING HAND

(Illustrated Summary)

THE CHIEF difficulty confronting the student of Contract is that the subject matter is presented, not as a brief, unified whole, but as a series of loosely joined rules and isolated instances which are soon forgotten, because the skeleton of essential principles is difficult to grasp. The beginner is like a stranger in a large city. First of all, he must find his bearings from a high tower and, locating the key points, separate the essential traffic arteries from the side streets and blind alleys. In the preceding chapters the writer, of necessity, has made use of the analytical method in order to explain the reasons for every important bidding situation and the inferences that must logically arise therefrom. In this Illustrated Summary, the writer complements the analytical with the synthetic method to give a quick, bird's-eye view of the language of inferences. The price of repetition—the bugaboo of writers—is not too great to pay when clarity is at stake, for that which is clearly understood is never forgotten.

Only some of the most important bidding situations and their inferences are analysed below. (In the examples given it is assumed that the opponents do not bid.)

OPENING SUIT BIDS OF ONE AND RAISES

THE OPENING BID IS—

THE RESPONSE IS—

One in a suit

Two in the same suit

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

Playing-tricks: From $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks made up of trump, long-suit, short-suit or honour-tricks, including adequate trump support. (*When the opponent on the left of the Opening bidder passes, the single Raise by the Responding*

Hand may show as little as $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 'shaded' playing-tricks.)

Trumps: A Raise from one to two shows four trumps, or three headed by at least the Queen. With three small trumps (negative trump support) Responding Hand should bid another suit, if able, or take out with no-trump.

Hands distributed 4-3-3-3 will frequently contain adequate trumps, and from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 honour-tricks, and yet not enough length or ruffing-tricks to justify a Raise. They should be shown by bidding one or two no-trump.

In Raises no definite minimum of honour strength is required, except when there is an immediate Raise to game, as, for instance:

Opening Hand

1 ♠

Responding Hand

4 ♠

The direct Raise to game should not be made unless the hand contains from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 honour-tricks, to safeguard the partnership against the possibility of attempting a Slam when the values held as a whole do not justify it. With a hand such as

♠ K 9 8 6 3 ♥ 4 ♦ A 7 6 5 4 3 ♣ 4

in support of partner's Opening one spade bid, there are 7 playing-tricks or more than sufficient for a Raise to four. And yet the proper bid is three spades, because the hand is poor in honour values. With such hands, containing predominantly distributional values, it is best to 'pull in' a Raise.

A single Raise is a minimum response, because it denies values enough for two or more Raises.

EXAMPLE I

(A minimum Raise)

The Opening bid is one spade:

1½	♠ A Q 10 2
0	♥ 9 8
1	♦ A 5 4 2
0	♣ 10 8 7

2½

honour-tricks

The Response is two spades:

2½	0	♠ 9 8 4 3	½
0	1	♥ A 7 4 2	1½
1½	0	♦ 7 3	1
0	½	♣ Q J 6	½

4

playing-tricks

1½

honour-tricks

3½

playing-tricks

The Opening bidder holds a minimum bid ($2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks), hears a minimum response and passes thereafter.

With one heart less and one small diamond—distribution 4-3-3-3—the proper response is one no-trump *in spite of* four trumps.

THE OPENING BID IS—

One in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

Three in the same suit.

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

Playing-tricks: Between $4\frac{1}{2}$ and 6 playing-tricks. Jump Raises are *almost* Forcing, and partner should rebid when holding even slight additional values.

EXAMPLE 2

(A near-game Raise)

The Opening bid is one spade:

$1\frac{1}{2}$	♠ A Q 9 7 2
0	♥ 9 8
1	♦ A 5 4 3
0	♣ 10 8

$2\frac{1}{2}$
honour-tricks

The Response is three spades:

$3\frac{1}{2}$	0	♠ J 8 4 3	1
0	1	♥ A 7 4 2	$1\frac{1}{2}$
$1\frac{1}{2}$	0	♦ 7	2
0	1	♣ K J 3 2	$1\frac{1}{2}$

—
5
playing-tricks

—
2
honour-tricks

—
6
playing-tricks

The Opening bidder holds slightly better than a minimum and should rebid from three to four.

THE OPENING BID IS—

One in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

Four in the same suit.

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks, including $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 honour-tricks.

Each new Raise shows added strength. The convention advocated by some writers that a Raise from one to three is Forcing and is a Slam invitation, but that a Raise from one

to game is a 'stop signal', is illogical and impractical. A Raise from one to game simply shows more tricks than a Raise from one to three and for that reason is frequently in itself a logical Slam invitation. To make the Raise from one to three Forcing is to cripple the bidding on a very important range of hands, which are too strong for one Raise and not quite strong enough for three Raises. Besides, the Responding Hand loses the benefit of *free* responses from the Opening Hand.

EXAMPLE 3

(A game Raise)

The Opening bid is one spade:

1½	♠ A Q 10 7 2	3½
0	♥ 9 8	0
1	♦ A 5 4 3	1½
0	♣ 10 8	0
—	—	—
2½		5
honour-tricks		playing-tricks

The Response is four spades:

1	♠ K 8 6 4 3	2
1	♥ A 7 4 2	1½
0	♦ 7	2
1	♣ K J 3	1
—	—	—
3		6½
honour-tricks		playing-tricks

It will be noted that the King of partner's bid suit is given its full value of 1 trick, equivalent to an honour-trick.

A SLAM RAISE

THE OPENING BID IS—

One in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

Five in the same suit.

The situation *one spade, five spades by partner* is practically non-existent. If partner is strong enough to invite a Slam by bidding over a game contract he will, as a rule, be strong enough to make a Forcing Take-out, with some other suit, and thus obtain more precise information from partner's responses *at a lower stage of bidding*. In rare instances, when no other biddable suit is available, a Force can be made on any lower ranking three-card suit headed by an Ace.

SHUT-OUT RAISES

If partner opens with, say, one heart and the intervening opponent doubles, any Jump Raise by the Responding Hand is a *shut-out Raise* based purely on distributional values. The Responding Hand's failure to *redouble* logically indicates lack of honour strength.

SECONDARY RAISES

When an opponent on the left of the Opening Hand overcalls (and thus keeps the bidding open for partner) the Responding Hand should not Raise immediately with a hand such as this:

♠ J 9 8 3 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ Q 9 7 6 4 ♣ 6

Suppose partner opened with one spade, and opponent overcalls with two hearts. An immediate Raise may easily misinform partner, who cannot visualize a hand without an honour-trick. A Secondary Raise would forewarn partner.

OPENING SUIT BIDS OF ONE AND SUIT TAKE-OUTS

THE OPENING BID IS—

One in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

One in a different suit.

(One Over One)

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

When the Responding Hand responds to the Opening bid of one with a bid of one in a higher ranking suit, the fact that a Forcing Take-out is not made is a direct inference that the Responding Hand does not contain $3\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks, or has a 4-3-3-3 distribution; otherwise, a Forcing Take-out would have been made. However, a simple Take-out may be made on a hand which ranges in strength from 1 to 3 plus honour-tricks, and hence a game is likely if the Opening Hand has some additional value. The inference from a simple Take-out is that the Responding Hand lacks adequate trump support, but has a biddable suit with from 1 to 3 plus honour-tricks in the hand. (See Chapter XII, 'The One Over One'.)

When, in order to overcall an Opening one-bid, a Take-

out of two is necessary, the inference to be drawn is the same as that just stated on the preceding page, except that the Opening Hand may infer that the new trump suit thus shown will be better than four cards in length.

EXAMPLE 1 (*A Regulation Take-out*)

The Opening bid is one heart:

0	♠ 9 3 2
1½	♥ A Q J 7
½	♦ K 10 3
½	♣ K 9 5

—
2½
honour-tricks

The Response is one spade:

0	½	♠ Q J 8 7 6	2½
3	0	♥ 3 2	0
½	+	♦ J 7 6 5	½
½	1	♣ A 3	1

—
4
1½+
honour-tricks 4
playing-tricks playing-tricks
 with spades as
 trumps

After the one spade response, the Opening Hand should bid a negative no-trump because it contains ♥ J above a minimum; and unless partner makes another suit bid (when it is necessary to show a 'preference'), pass thereafter.

The Responding Hand passes the one no-trump response of the Opening Hand on the next round.

In this example, if the spades and diamonds were interchanged, the response would be two diamonds, and it would carry the same inferences as the one spade response.

THE OPENING BID IS—

One in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

A Jump two-bid in a different suit.

(when a one-bid is sufficient to overcall)

Inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

This is a Forcing Take-out signalling an eventual game at some bid yet to be determined. It shows about 3½ honour-tricks or more, and also a biddable suit. With hands containing about 4 honour-tricks the suit may be only four cards in length. *To raise, adequate trump support is required in partner's hand just as when responding to a one-bid.* The

Opening and Responding Hands are now forced to keep the bidding unconditionally open until some game bid is reached.

Forcing Take-outs are restricted to Jumps of *one-odd trick higher than necessary*. A Jump of two-odd tricks is not Forcing, though it is an 'urgent invitation'. For instance, *one heart—two spades* is a Forcing Take-out; but *one heart—three spades* simply shows a long trump suit and about 7 playing-tricks in all, with but little outside honour strength. A Jump four-bid in another suit shows about 8 playing-tricks with little or no outside honour strength.

EXAMPLE 2 (*A Forcing Take-out*)

<i>The Opening Hand</i>		<i>The Responding Hand</i>	
0	♠ 7	2	♠ A K 4 3 2
2	♥ A K J 8 6	+	♥ Q 4
+	♦ Q 8 6	0	♦ 10
1	♣ K J 9 6	1½	♣ A Q 5 4 3
—		—	
3+		3½+	
honour-tricks		honour-tricks	
1 ♥ 3 ♥ ² 6 ♣ ⁴		<i>The Bidding:</i>	
		2 ♠ ¹ 4 ♣ ³ All pass	

Analysis:

¹ A Forcing Take-out. Note that the spade suit is rather weak. A Forcing bid shows strength *in the hand* and attempts to *find out* what is the best suit.

² Showing a rebiddable suit.

³ Showing a second possible suit, implying the question, 'Is this any better, partner?'

⁴ Showing at least 2 playing-tricks more than already shown by the three heart Rebid. The singleton spade is worth 2 tricks with four trumps. Besides, the hand has 3+ honour-tricks. A bid of only five clubs would look like a mere 'preference'.

From the nature of responses by the Opening Hand to the Forcing Take-out, the Responding Hand can in turn determine the Rebid strength, if any, and the distribution of the Opening Hand.

Any response other than two no-trump indicates *Rebid values as follows*:

A three heart bid shows a Rebid trump suit (about 4 trump tricks). A *Jump Rebid to four hearts* shows a powerful six-card or longer trump suit containing but one possible loser.

A three spade Raise shows as good as Q 3 2, or four small trumps and one more playing-trick than was shown by the Opening bid.

A four spade Raise shows good spade support, and at least 2 more playing-tricks.

A three no-trump bid shows at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks since it is a Jump over the two no-trump required. To illustrate: Add ♠ low and ♦ J in lieu of ♣ 6 and ♦ 6.

There remain many more inferences which can be drawn even by average players, once the simple mechanism of the Forcing principle and responses is grasped.

Consider the wealth of precise and logical information rapidly exchanged between partners through a mounting series of Forcing bids and responses. It is obvious that only the Forcing method offers such a multiplicity of bids involving neither the risk of premature passing nor the danger of futile overbidding.

OPENING SUIT BIDS OF ONE & NO-TRUMP TAKE-OUTS

THE OPENING BID IS—

One in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

One no-trump.

Inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

Partner has inadequate trump support or, if holding adequate trumps, unfavourable distribution for the trump bid. Partner also lacks any other biddable suit for a Regulation Take-out (either he cannot overcall with a bid of one in a higher ranking suit, or he deems it inadvisable to overcall with two in a lower ranking suit, owing to the weakness of the suit).

The negative one no-trump response keeps the bidding open without increasing the contract, and at the same time warns partner that although the hand contains about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, it does not contain more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

The negative one no-trump is a logical corollary of the Approach-Forcing principle. Some players and writers who are, as the French say, '*plus royaliste que le roi*', practically nullify the value of a good principle by abusing it with bids of one no-trump on as little as a Queen and a Knave, and sometimes even less. At least 1+ honour-tricks is the indispensable minimum basis for *gauging the Rebid values in the Opening Hand*.

Bids of one no-trump merely to announce that the hand is quite weak or, worse still, merely because a singleton is held in partner's bid suit, upset the delicate balance of Rebid values, especially with the type of hands in which the bidding is already very close. As a result valuable part-scores are squandered on futile attempts for game and unnecessary penalties are incurred.

By a strange ricochet the very players who indulge in 'ultra-negative' no-trump rescues will frequently fail to contract for a successful game when partner holds 1½ honour-tricks.

EXAMPLE I

(The 'negative' one no-trump)

The Opening bid is one
heart:

0 ♠ 3 2
1½ ♥ A Q J 7
½ ♦ Q J 7 6
½ ♣ Q J 2

2½

honour-tricks

0
2½
1
½

4

playing-
tricks with

hearts as trumps

The Response is one no-trump

(a)

½ ♠ Q J 4
0 ♥ 9 6
1 ♦ A 10 3 2
0 ♣ 7 5 4 3

1½

honour-tricks

(b)

½ ♠ Q J 4
1 ♥ K 9 5
½ ♦ K 9 8 4
0 ♣ 9 8 6

2

honour-tricks

After a 'negative' one no-trump Take-out the Opening Hand should not bid again unless holding from 1 to 1½ honour-tricks in excess of the 2½ already

Note that in the second example (b), the Responding Hand bids one no-trump although holding K 9 5 in trumps. The distribution is in-

shown, or added length in trumps. The Opening Hand may raise partner's one no-trump to *two* no-trump, if his hand contains at least 4 honour-tricks with a total of at least 6 sure winners at no-trump.

When holding $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 honour tricks, with 7 sure winners at no-trump, the Opening Hand raises partner's one no-trump to *three* no-trump. In determining his sure winners at no-trump, the player counts only honours (giving them their full value as explained on page 57), or a long, unquestionably established suit.

adequate for a trump bid—lacking ruffing values in short suits. A count of the hand in support of the heart bid discloses but $2\frac{1}{2}$ playing-tricks, which is sufficient only for a Raise from one to two. This type of hand is best played at no-trump.

(Though not, strictly speaking, an honour-trick, the heart King is given its full value of 1 trick because partner has bid hearts.)

THE OPENING BID IS—

One in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

Two no-trump.

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

A Jump Take-out with two no-trump is not absolutely Forcing, but partner should rebid with the slightest excuse: a plus value or almost anything but a bare $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks distributed 4-3-3-3. The Take-out denies a biddable suit, but shows about $2\frac{1}{2}$ (to about $3\frac{1}{2}$) honour-tricks. With a bare $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks distributed 4-3-3-3, avoid the Jump two no-trump.

EXAMPLE 2

The Opening bid is one heart

$\frac{1}{2}$	♠ K 2	$\frac{1}{2}$
$1\frac{1}{2}$	♥ A Q 3 2	$2\frac{1}{2}$
$\frac{1}{2}$	♦ Q J 7 6	1
$\frac{1}{2}$	♣ Q J 2	$\frac{1}{2}$
3		$4\frac{1}{2}$

honour-tricks

playing-tricks

with hearts as trumps

The Response is two no-trump

$1\frac{1}{2}$	♠ A Q 4
+	♥ J 6
1	♦ A 10 3 2
0	♣ 7 5 4 3
$2\frac{1}{2}+$	

honour-tricks

The Opening Hand has 3 honour-tricks and therefore a Raise to three no-trump.

In the preceding example, substitute the ♣ A for the ♣ 7. This will give about $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, the value required for three no-trump. About the same honour strength is required for a three no-trump Take-out as for a Forcing suit Take-out. The only difference is that the no-trump Take-out *denies a biddable suit*. With a five-card biddable suit, even a minor, the Forcing (suit) Take-out should be preferred.

OPENING ONE NO-TRUMP BIDS AND SUIT TAKE-OUTS
(For no-trump Raises, see Valuation, Chapter III)

THE OPENING BID IS—

One no-trump.

(Vulnerable)

THE RESPONSE IS—

Two in a suit.

(A Regulation Take-out)

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

The minimum:

Either a five-card suit—major or minor—headed at least by a Queen, with about 1 honour-trick in the hand; or any six-card suit headed by as little as $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick.

The maximum:

A biddable suit and not more than $2+$ honour-tricks in the hand.

EXAMPLE I

The Opening Hand:

1	♠	K J 9	1
1	♥	A 10 9 6	$1\frac{1}{2}$
1	♦	A 6 5 4	$1\frac{1}{2}$
$1\frac{1}{2}$	♣	A Q	$2\frac{1}{2}$
<hr/>			
$4\frac{1}{2}$		$6\frac{1}{2}$	

honour-tricks playing-tricks
in support of
hearts

The Responding Hand

0	♠	10 5 4	0
1	♥	K 8 5 4 3	$2\frac{1}{2}$
0	♦	7	0
$\frac{1}{2}$	♣	K 7 4 3	1
<hr/>			
$1\frac{1}{2}$		$3\frac{1}{2}$	

honour-tricks playing-tricks
with hearts as
trumps

*The Bidding:*1 N T¹3 ♥²

2 ♥

4 ♥³*Analysis:* All pass¹ The hand contains no biddable suit.

² The Responding Hand can be assumed to contain a five-card biddable suit and at least 1 honour-trick, which should be worth a minimum of 3 playing-tricks. There is, however, the danger that the two heart Take-out was based upon a long, weak suit, and an otherwise worthless hand. For this reason one of the two Raises which might conceivably be given is withheld, giving the Responding Hand a chance to pass three hearts if it had been his intention to sign off at three hearts to a Rebid of two no-trumps.

³ Having the specified requirement of 1 honour-trick, with a biddable suit and 3½ playing-tricks in the hand, this hand easily justifies proceeding to a game contract when support for the heart suit is assured and the Opening Hand has indicated Rebid strength. This hand illustrates the advantage of leaving some of the bidding responsibility to the Responding Hand. If it were common for the Opening Hand to give an immediate Raise to game after a Simple Take-out, many opportunities for playing an unbalanced weak hand in a safe low contract would be lost, for any shaded Take-out would be too dangerous.

THE OPENING BID IS—

*One no-trump.**(Not Vulnerable)*

THE RESPONSE IS—

*A Jump to three in any suit.**(A Forcing Take-out)*

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

The minimum:

A biddable suit and 3 or more honour-tricks ; exceptionally (with unbalanced distribution or a solid trump suit) 2½ honour-tricks. After a vulnerable one no-trump (which shows about 4 honour-tricks), a Forcing Take-out may be shaded to 2 honour-tricks with strong distribution. The Forcing Take-out assures a reasonably certain game either at a suit or at no-trump.

EXAMPLE 2

The Opening Hand

♠ Q 7 6 5
♥ A K 3
♦ K 10 6 3
♣ J 3

The Responding Hand

♠ A
♥ 4
♦ A Q J 7 5 4
♣ K Q 10 8 5

The Bidding:

1 N T

3 ♠¹6 ♦⁵3 ♦
4 ♣²

All pass

Analysis:

¹ Any four-card major suit must be the response to a Forcing Take-out in a minor suit (see page 119a).

² This bid by inference denies that the Forcing Take-out in diamonds was conventional, and indicates that the Responding Hand has two strong suits, with enough distributional strength to make a minor suit contract preferable to no-trump.

³ The bidding is now ordinarily Forcing until game is reached. The Forcing Take-out and the Club Rebid above the no-trump game level show the Responding Hand to be very strong, and probably to have Slam probabilities. This bid simply shows a preference and not additional strength.

⁴ Showing two Aces and the King of a bid suit.

⁵ The Responding Hand clearly showed his desire to reach a Slam contract. Having one of the missing Aces and better than adequate support for the diamond suit, it is proper to contract for a Slam immediately (see page 274).

THE OPENING HAND BIDS—

*One heart**Four hearts!*

THE RESPONSE IS—

Two Spades.

The bid of four hearts is the Jump Trump Rebid, showing a six-card or longer suit with not more than one loser. This unnecessarily high Jump Rebid (to four) in one's own suit *after* any strength-showing bid by partner does not necessarily show added honour values but does announce a near-solid trump suit. The inference is valuable for Slam bids when partner holds one or two cards of the suit. (See page 161.)

SIGN-OFF (RESCUE) BIDS

In the Culbertson System there are no rescue bids except when the Responding Hand has bid and repeated the bid of the same suit at least twice and is at the level of three-bids. To illustrate:

	<i>The Opening Hand</i>	<i>The Responding Hand</i>
1.	1 N T 2 N T	2 ♥ 3 ♥! (Sign-off)
OR		
2.	1 N T 2 ♥	2 ♦ 3 ♦! (Sign-off)

In either of the preceding situations the Responding Hand had the choice of bidding four in a suit or three no-trump instead of three hearts or three diamonds. The inference is therefore clear that it is a Sign-off bid. A Sign-off bid shows a six-card or longer suit with *1 honour-trick or less* in the hand. For example, a hand like the following:

♠ 4 ♥ K 9 7 5 4 3 ♦ Q 9 4 2 ♣ 10 5

FORCING TWO-BIDS AND NO-TRUMP RESPONSES
THE OPENING BID IS—
<i>Two in a suit.</i>

The inferences conveyed by the Opening Hand are these:

1. A biddable suit—possibly only four cards.

2. In all, at least $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in three suits with any biddable suit; or, with a strong six-card suit or a two-suiter, 5 honour-tricks in three suits; or, with freaks and solid suits, $4\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. With distributions 4-3-3-3 and 4-4-3-2, a bid of one is preferable to a Forcing two-bid, even with $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, if partner is an advanced player.

An Opening two-bid is primarily a method of arriving at a game bid, and

THE RESPONSE IS—
<i>Two no-trump.</i>

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

A minimum response to denote a hand containing 1 or less honour-trick. The two no-trump response safeguards the Opening bidder against losing Slam attempts. Even if able to raise, or if holding a five-card suit headed by a King or QJ but no outside strength, two no-trump must be bid in preference to a suit. Very freakish hands are no exception. *With an absolutely worthless hand the Responding Hand must still bid.* This apparently insane procedure is not only safe but will prove to be the

secondarily a method of arriving at a Slam bid.

That an Opening two-bid should be stronger than an Opening three-, four- or five-bid is not illogical. Opening three- or higher bids show a long, practically solid trump suit. Most very strong hands, however, contain trump suits which are not established, and require additional information from partner to determine whether a suit or no-trump offers better chances for game. The Forcing two-bid obtains this information and at the same time eliminates the risk of partner passing before game is reached. For this reason, Opening five-bids in major suits or direct Slam bids are practically eliminated in the Culbertson System. All very strong hands must first 'be passed through the sieve' of Forcing bids. The minimum requirements for two-bids are so balanced that the greatest possible number of powerful hands is covered; at the same time, if partner be trickless or the distribution very unfavourable, the maximum (very occasional) loss would not exceed 1 trick. If the re-

most advantageous, because:

1. The Opening bidder holds a hand of such tremendous strength that, if *it were not for the Forcing principle*, he would be forced to bid directly for a game or a Slam without the benefit of precise information that he may obtain from partner at a low stage of bidding. Thus, with a hand such as

♠ A K Q 2 ♥ A K Q 2

♦ A K Q J ♣ 7

and the possible Dummy

♠ J 4 3 ♥ 5 4

♦ 9 7 6 4 3 ♣ 10 8 4

a three no-trump bid would quite likely be penalized; a game or a Slam will, as a rule, depend on discovering the *longest suit* in the Dummy. If there be no such long suit but, instead, a stopper in clubs, the no-trump can always be bid later.

2. The two-bid covers the most important range of powerful hands, many of which are freaks requiring several rounds of assured bidding for precise elucidation. As a result, the range of inferences in one, three and higher bids or responses acquires an extraordinary definiteness and scientific precision.

quirement for a two-bid be even $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks too high, the usefulness of a two-bid will be considerably limited; on the other hand, a two-bid is the one bid that cannot be 'shaded' without risking a heavy penalty.

3. An artificial two or one club bid, used by some players to indicate a powerful hand, is certainly superior to any so-called 'natural' or 'common-sense' method, but it has many serious disadvantages, and for this reason has been dropped in favour of the Forcing two-bid in a playable suit by all the master players except one. The very fact that the club bid is so highly artificial leads to a confusion of bidding inferences. The artificial club and diamond bids which show great honour strength are inextricably mixed up with the real club and diamond bids which show *distribution* (suit lengths). As a result of this waste of inferences and bids (wholly unnecessary with Forcing two-bids with which both the strength *and length* are shown in a single bid), neither partner *really* knows the precise distribution of hands and suits in combined hands. The fact that *some* sort of convention governing the tactics with powerful hands is indispensable, has been admitted by all except a handful of diehards in America and abroad. Not

Continued from 2nd column page 206.

wishing to make even a slight mental effort to understand the *logical beauty* of inferences which underlie any Forcing bid, they agitate in favour of a 'no convention game', without realizing that, in so doing, they are blissfully inconsistent: for the very same people are the loudest in insisting that partner lead the *fourth best* of his suit or that he bid on a minimum of '*sure tricks*'—two of the oldest and most artificial conventions in Bridge.

EXAMPLE 1

(The 'bust' two no-trump)

<i>The Opening Hand</i>		<i>The Responding Hand</i>	
2	♠ A K Q 5 3	0	♠ 6 4
2	♥ A K Q 4	0	♥ J 6 5 2
1	♦ A 10	0	♦ 8 7 5 4
0	♣ 4 3	0	♣ 9 6 2
—		—	
5		0	
honour-tricks		honour-tricks	
<i>The Bidding:</i>			
2	♠	2	N T ¹
3	♥ ²	4	♥
All pass			

Analysis:

¹ The two no-trump response covers hands ranging in value from 0 to 1 honour-trick.

² In spite of the two no-trump response the bidding must continue until some game bid is reached.

The hands will probably make four hearts.

EXAMPLE 2

<i>The Opening Hand</i>		<i>The Responding Hand</i>	
2	♠ A K Q 10 3	0	♠ J 6 4 2
2	♥ A K 10 4	0	♥ 3 2
2	♦ A K 10	$\frac{1}{2}$	♦ Q J 5 3
0	♣ 4	0	♣ 9 6 2
—		—	
6		$\frac{1}{2}$	
honour-tricks		honour-trick	

Analysis:
 2 ♠
 3 ♥
 6 ♠³

The Bidding:

2 N T¹
 4 ♠²
 All pass

¹ The Responding Hand has one Raise in spades. He should, however, first warn partner that the hand contains 1 or *less* honour-trick.

² Having denied more than 1 honour-trick by his negative two no-trump response on the first round, the Responding Hand now shows that his hand contains sufficient playing-tricks for a single Raise. *Three* spades could be construed as nothing more than a preference, perhaps based solely on the fact that his spades were stronger than his hearts. With

♠ 7 4 2 ♥ 5 3 ♦ 8 6 4 3 ♣ 7 4 3 2

the response would nevertheless have to be three spades at this point. By first showing the limit of his honour-trick holding and on the next round giving a free Raise, the exact nature of the hand is described.

³ The Opening Hand can now see that he will have a good chance to make a Small Slam even if his partner holds as little as $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick, with a doubleton heart and four trumps. Thus, his six-spade bid has a better than even chance of success. It is noteworthy that one or two writers recommend bidding only *one* spade to open this hand, because there are not the *ten sure tricks* they require for a two-bid. Partner may pass their one spade—and six are made.

THE OPENING BID IS—

Two in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

Three no-trump.

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

From $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. Lack of normal support in partner's bid suit. Lack of any other biddable suit.

EXAMPLE 3

The Opening Hand

1 ♠ A 4
 2 ♥ A K Q J 10 6
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ ♦ A Q 7 3
 0 ♣ J

$4\frac{1}{2}$

honour-tricks

The Responding Hand

1 ♠ K Q
 0 ♥ 4 3 2
 1 { ♦ K 10 5 2
 ♣ Q 6 3 2

2

honour-tricks

The Bidding:

2 ♥
5 N T²

3 N T¹
6 ♥³

Analysis:

¹ A hand with even 1½ honour-tricks is strong when combined with the 5 honour-tricks shown by partner. Opponents at the maximum can hold the equivalent of only 2 tricks. (See Rule of Eight.)

² A new Forcing bid which shows three Aces and ♥ K (see Slam Bids). If the Opener held four Aces, his bid should have been four no-trump and *then* five no-trump.

³ A 'Sign-off' bid in this case, denying ♣ A. A 'Sign-off' or minimum response after the Forcing no-trump is always made with the lower ranking bid suit. It is obvious, of course, that the Opener would not place his partner in such a predicament unless he himself held a very powerful heart suit. With Example 3, it is quite likely that if the Four-Five No-trump convention were not used, a Grand Slam bid would be reached and set 1 trick.

THE OPENING BID IS—

THE RESPONSE IS—

Two in a suit.

(Five no-trump, Forcing.)

The inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

At least 3 honour-tricks, including an Ace.

EXAMPLE 4

*The Opening Hand:**The Responding Hand:*

1 ♠ A 4
2 ♥ A K Q J 10 6
1½ ♦ A Q 7 3
0 ♣ J
—
4½

1 ♠ K Q
0 ♥ 4 3 2
½ ♦ K 10 5 2
1½ ♣ A Q 3 2
—
3

honour-tricks

honour-tricks

The Bidding:

2 ♥
7 ♥¹

5 N T
All pass

¹ The Opening Hand may now certainly bid the Grand Slam.

AN ANCIENT FALLACY

EXAMPLE 5

The Opening Hand

♠ A K Q 2
 ♥ A K Q 7
 ♦ A K Q J
 ♣ 3

The Responding Hand

♠ 3
 ♥ 8 6 4
 ♦ 9 8 7 6 2
 ♣ 9 8 7 6

The Bidding:

2 ♠
 3 ♥
 4 ♦
 6 ♦

2 N T
 3 N T
 5 ♦

Analysis:

While anything may happen, even with such a powerful hand, the two-bid offers a choice of three suit bids and a no-trump. One writer seriously advocates bidding originally two no-trump on this hand instead of two spades. The reason, he states, is that the Declarer will be forced to ruff a club lead and thus remain with but three trumps. This is, as previously explained, a revival of an old fallacy that held up the development of four-card suit bids for fifteen years. If four trumps are held in the Dummy, the Declarer, far from fearing a ruff in his own hand, welcomes it, and frequently does it himself. His own hand *becomes the Dummy* while Dummy's four-card trump suit becomes the principal length. Seriously to advocate a two no-trump Opening bid (at least three no-trump is a lesser atrocity) and thus suppress three *biddable* suits is simply to show a profound ignorance of the mechanics of modern four-card suit plays.

FORCING TWO-BIDS AND RAISES

Suit Raises of Opening two-bids obviously require a scale different from and lower than that for suit Raises of Opening one-bids. Another difference is that, unlike Opening one-bids, the *full value* of available Raises need not, in many cases, be given at once. Since partner must keep the bidding open up to game, it will be found advisable in some cases not to overcrowd the bidding range until he has been heard from again.

The first Raise should be given on adequate trump sup-

port (Q 3 2 or four small) and at least 1 honour-trick outside. Two Raises require *slightly better* than adequate trumps (four trumps headed by a Knave, or three headed by a King) or proportionately greater honour strength. Two Raises are given, therefore, with slightly better than adequate trumps and (1) 2 honour-tricks outside; or (2) 1½ honour-tricks outside and a doubleton; or (3) but 1 honour-trick outside and a singleton. The Ace or two honours in the trump suit will proportionately enhance the value of the hand.

Suppose partner bids two spades and you hold:

♠ 10 4 3 2 ♥ 5 3 2 ♦ A 8 6 4 ♣ 8 5

With adequate trump support in spades and 1 honour-trick, you have one full Raise. If partner rebids to five spades your doubleton club justifies a Raise to six.

Again, suppose your partner opens with two spades and you hold:

♠ J 4 3 2 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A Q 6 2 ♣ K 5 4

Your 2 honour-tricks, plus a doubleton heart, in addition to good trump support, justify a triple Raise *to five spades*. Of course, too much reliance should not be placed on singletons or doubletons, as in the case of Opening one-bids. Slam bids are much more a matter of top cards than game bids. For this reason, *if a hand contains a purely distributional Raise or Raises, and does not contain more than 1 honour-trick, partner should respond with two no-trump and raise subsequently.*

When the Responding Hand contains 1 honour-trick in the suit bid by partner and but a plus value outside, the proper response is also two no-trump. In other words, holding: ♠ A 4 3 2 ♥ 8 7 5 ♦ 10 8 3 ♣ J 9 4 two no-trump should be bid over an original bid of two spades.

FORCING TWO-BIDS AND SUIT TAKE-OUTS

THE OPENING BID IS—

Two in a suit.

THE RESPONSE IS—

Two (or, if the lower rank of the suit so requires, three) in a different suit.

Inferences conveyed by the Responding Hand are these:

At least 1+ honour-tricks in *the hand*. In the *suit* ½ honour-trick (QJ or K), if the suit is of five cards; and even no honours, if the suit is of six cards.

When the hand contains more than a minimum of 1+

honour-tricks it is permissible to bid a shaded suit as weak as Q 10 4 3 2, or J 10 4 3 2.

To illustrate, suppose your partner has opened with two diamonds, and you hold:

♠ K 9 8 7 5 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ 10 5 4 ♣ 10 9

The proper response is two no-trump. If partner bids three no-trump—pass; if partner bids, say, three diamonds, show the spades. But if you hold:

♠ K 9 8 7 5 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ 10 5 4 ♣ 10 9

The proper response is two spades. The hand contains $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

Contrary to the procedure in Raises and no-trump Take-outs, the Responding Hand should *practically never jump the suit Take-out no matter what its strength*, but should respond as low as possible until a game bid is reached. The full strength of the hand should be disclosed only *after* hearing again from the Opening bidder. Since the bidding will be kept open in any event, the high Jump suit Take-outs may seriously interfere with partner and prevent him from showing the precise lengths of his suits, through Rebids at a low range of bidding.

OPENING THREE-BIDS AND RESPONSES

Opening bids of three in a suit, when not vulnerable, are principally Pre-emptive bids. They show a strong trump suit, requiring no support, and about 6 or 7 playing-tricks. The Responding Hand should pass unless holding 3 playing-tricks, and these should be in honour- or ruffing-tricks only, for distributional values are unlikely to develop any tricks in conjunction with the type of hand shown by a three-bid. When the three-bid, not vulnerable, is in a minor suit, the Responding Hand should not bid three no-trump unless his hand contains at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, with stoppers in all three of the unbid suits.

Opening three-bids, *when vulnerable*, are strength-showing bids. They guarantee at least 8 *sure* winners, with a minimum of 2 honour-tricks outside. No trump support is required; and when the three-bid is in a minor suit it shows a solid trump suit.¹

¹ Many players use the minor suit three-bid, whether vulner

Consequently, the Responding Hand may, if the three-bid is in a major suit:

1. Raise to four if holding about 1 honour-trick; or a ruffing-trick, such as a singleton and at least two trumps; or $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick and a possible ruffing-trick, such as a doubleton and three or more trumps.

2. Bid three no-trump, with 1 honour-trick and two of the unbid suits stopped.

3. Take out in a biddable five-card suit, if holding about 1 honour-trick (so that if the Opening Hand rebids to four of his suit he will find the necessary support in Dummy).

When the three-bid is in a minor suit, the Responding Hand may:

1. Raise to five, if holding about *two* honour-tricks; or 1 honour-trick and 1 ruffing-trick.

2. Bid three no-trump, if holding about 1 honour-trick with two of the unbid suits stopped; or with less than 1 honour-trick, but all three of the unbid suits stopped.

3. Take out in any five-card biddable higher-ranking suit.

EXAMPLE 1

*The Opening bid is
three spades, vulnerable:*

♠ A K Q 9 6 3 2
♥ —
♦ 6 4 3
♣ A Q 3

The response is:

four spades

♠ 8 5 4
♥ J 10 9 6 4
♦ 2
♣ 10 8 5 2

three no-trump

♠ 8
♥ 8 4 3 2
♦ A 10 8 7
♣ J 10 9 5

The Opening Hand, having no strength in hearts or diamonds which might aid a no-trump contract, rebids to four spades over three no-trump.

EXAMPLE 2

*The Opening bid is
three diamonds,
vulnerable:*

♠ 9 4
♥ A Q 8
♦ A K Q J 8 5 3
♣ 2

*three
no-trump*

♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ 9 4 3
♦ 6 2
♣ K 9 8 4

*The response is:
three
hearts*

♠ J 7 5
♥ K J 7 4 2
♦ 7 4
♣ 8 6 5

*five
diamonds*

♠ A 8 6 3
♥ 7 4
♦ 10 6 2
♣ K Q 6 4

able or not, to show a long, solid suit with some support for a no-trump outside (see page 127). This is quite permissible and was formerly recommended by the author, until it became obvious in actual play that the bid is too seldom used to be of great value,

A four-bid in a lower ranking suit is an indirect Raise and therefore partner must revert to his original suit if holding insufficient support. It does not necessarily show a strong suit.

OPENING FOUR-BIDS AND MINOR SUIT FIVE-BIDS AND RESPONSES (PURE OVERBIDS)

Four in a major or minor and five in a minor are Pre-emptive (shut-out) overbids. The hand guarantees a long and powerful trump suit but promises not more than 1 honour-trick outside and may contain no outside honour strength whatever, and generally is unsuited for any other bid or for a Penalty Double or for a Slam.

There is nothing illogical in the fact that an opening four-bid is actually much weaker than lower bids when one considers that defensively such hands are practically worthless. Therefore, assuming partner to be weak, the only hope lies in bidding high enough to shut out opponents or at least to drive them into a wrong bid. If a penalty is suffered it will be at worst the equivalent of a game that might otherwise be scored by the opponents.

The procedure of the Responding Hand is consequently based upon the minimum shown by partner:

Any Opening four-bid shows:

When vulnerable—8 sure winners.¹ Maximum possible loss—500 points.

When not vulnerable—7 winners. Maximum expected loss—450 points.

The Opening five-bid in a minor suit shows:

When vulnerable—9 sure winners. Maximum possible loss—500 points.

whereas there are frequent occasions in which a Pre-emptive three-bid, when not vulnerable, and a strong bid, when vulnerable, are desirable; needs which the minor suit three-bid, under its present definition, fulfils.

¹ With a cautious partner this requirement may be shaded to 7 sure tricks plus.

When not vulnerable—8 winners. Maximum expected loss—450 points.

A Raise from four to five in a major, or from five to six in a minor, when forced by opponent's Overcall and when game is decidedly in jeopardy, shows about 2 playing-tricks if vulnerable, and 1 playing-trick if not vulnerable.

Here the Raise is a purely defensive overbid and should not be made unless it is reasonably certain that opponents will score game. Also, the danger of driving the opponents into a successful Slam bid must be kept in mind.

When the Raise is free—that is, when opponents pass—it obviously invites a Slam and shows from 3 to 4 winners (according to the bid) including at least 3 honour-tricks, vulnerable or not vulnerable.

EXAMPLE I

(A Forced Raise)

The Opening Hand

♠ 10 9 3 2
♥ —
♦ A K Q 10 9 8 5 4
♣ 5

The Responding Hand

♠ K J 7 6
♥ 9 8 5
♦ 7 6 2
♣ 8 6 4

The Bidding:

*The Opening Hand
not vulnerable*

5♦¹

The Opponent

5♥

The Responding Hand

6♦²

Analysis:

¹ It is possible that only 7 tricks can be made and, if partner's hand is blank, a loss of 700 points will be sustained. Such a gamble is worth while, since if partner has no tricks the opponents are practically certain to score game or even a Slam; if driven into a wrong bid, or if pushed a trick too high the opponents will lose full value of the game plus a penalty. If partner has anything, a game in diamonds is quite likely.

² The Opening Hand calculates his paying loss on the basis of a trickless Dummy. The Responding Hand has 1 trick and therefore raises once. Against the opponents, the Responding Hand can see 2 defensive tricks for the combined hands, but no more.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DEFENDING HAND

I. DEFENSIVE OVERCALLS

THE HAND that enters the bidding after one of the opponents has opened the bidding is called the Defending Hand, and its bids are called Defensive Overcalls and Take-out Doubles.

The essential fact about the Defending Hand is that any bid must be made in the face of honour strength already shown by the adverse Opening bid. Therefore, unless considerable honour-strength is held or the distribution is unusual, or, unless opponents have made a 'psychic', there is little hope for game, especially in minor suits or at no-trump, while a Slam is practically out of the question. This makes it all the more imperative to try and block the opponents from getting together for game or even for part-score, and to conduct by means of Defensive Overcalls, judiciously but boldly employed, a species of guerrilla warfare. To allow the opponents to take full advantage of Approach methods of bidding, without molesting them, simply on the ground that you cannot score game, is a costly fallacy. Each Defensive bid, judiciously made, diminishes the number of low bids available to opponents and consequently increases their margin of guesswork. Besides, there is the important psychological factor of inhibiting and confusing the opponents. The loss suffered through occasional Penalty Doubles as a result of 'nuisance tactics' is insignificant when compared with the large though mostly invisible advantages.

With strong hands it is equally unwise to refrain from bidding except for reasons of strategy. The part-score value alone (roughly 160 points) makes it worth while to bid, whenever able, either to secure a part-score or to prevent the

adversaries from doing likewise. Then there are profitable penalties accruing from deftly handled and spirited bidding not available to a passive temperament.

Passing with good hands after an opponent's Opening bid of one, to lie in wait in the hope of doubling the adversaries at a higher contract, is justifiable only for strategical reasons, especially *when one is reasonably assured that the adversaries or partner will bid again.*

For instance, after the artificial club bid, a pass with a very strong hand is justified because there will be another opportunity to bid.

A pass with a certain type of strong hand works very well also against players who have acquired the vicious habit of making one no-trump Take-outs on as little as a Queen and a Knave after partner's Opening one-bid. Here the opponents will often trap themselves into a disastrous contract, and the best policy is to give them plenty of rope by sitting tight. A good general principle to follow is to reserve the 'silent traps' for opponents who are vulnerable or whose bidding methods are so vague that they must largely rely on inferences which are conveyed through the general fact that the opponents *bid* (sign of strength) or *pass* (sign of weakness).¹ With vulnerable opponents a pass by a player on the left of the Opening Hand is often justified even with a very strong hand, provided that the distribution is such as to render a game at his own bid problematical. There is the possibility of a vulnerable penalty of 2 or 3 tricks, if the partner of the Opening Hand is weak; and the possibility of a disastrous penalty if the partner of the Opening Hand is just strong enough to push his own partner over the precipice. Even with

¹ It is here that the difference between a scientifically trained mind and a mind that knows only the difference between black and white is apparent. An expert mind will also think 'sign of strength' if the opponents bid and 'sign of weakness' if the opponents pass, but he will make a *mental reservation* expressed by the words 'provided . . .' or 'unless . . .' and thus suspend his judgment until a chain of new inferences turns the merely probable into a reasonable certainty.

♠ A K Q 8 6 4 3 2 ♥ — ♦ Q J 10 9 ♣ 8

a psychological pass over an opponent's Opening one heart bid is fairly safe; in fact, it is the best bid, if the opponents are not vulnerable, since it is almost certain that the bidding will continue. A straight bid of four spades conveys too much information to the opponents. Here the surprise element may easily be utilized to the best advantage.

Barring such special situations, waiting tactics will not win. The adversaries will usually play the hand at some low bid and either secure a part-score or their loss will be insignificant. The best way to trap the enemy is by bidding up—boldly but dexterously. It goes without saying that aggressive tactics are dangerous in face of strength already displayed by the enemy; they are successful when precise requirements are fulfilled and inferences are carefully exchanged. A player must remember that the hammer of the Opening bid is already over his head and that, when he is in the position of Second Hand, he may meet the anvil on his left. The extremes of vulnerable and non-vulnerable penalties impose, therefore, a double standard of Defensive bidding.

THE CULBERTSON RULE OF TWO AND THREE¹

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE GOVERNING ALL OVERBIDDING IN EXPERT PLAY

Except with a few rock-crushers, the value of any hand is relative, being dependent on the re-entries, stoppers, trumps and other suit lengths in partner's hand. Finesses must be made by leads from the Dummy, and Declarer's losers must be ruffed or side suits established on which losers from Declarer's hand can be discarded. All this requires *time* (stoppers) and *re-entries* in partner's hand.

¹ The Rule of Two and Three has been developed by the author for the Culbertson System of 1933 in order to remedy two of the greatest weaknesses of even expert players: excessive overbidding and excessive underbidding. This important rule is the basis of practically all bids other than Opening bids of one and two and responses to them.

The difficult problem is, *How many tricks* (which are also stoppers, re-entries, etc.) may be expected from partner? The limits of our bidding, the safety margin of our hands, will largely depend on the number of tricks which logically or mathematically we have the right to expect in partner's hand.

This problem is successfully solved when partner has made any kind of bid. At least we know that he has a definite minimum and that, according to the kind and number of his bid, this minimum is either higher or lower. The situation is quite different when partner *has passed or has not yet bid*. Caution demands that the latter situation should be treated, in the main, as though partner had passed, for he may easily hold a very weak hand. In either case, a player is confronted with a difficult problem, especially if he is forced to bid high. Should he 'play safe' and expect a blank, or should he 'take a flyer', hoping to find partner with something? The answer is that he should do neither.

To expect too much in partner's hand would lead to severe penalties. To expect 'nothing' in the Dummy would lead to an even greater evil—gross underbidding.

On the other hand, always to expect in the Dummy a fixed 'average' number—say, 2 tricks—is mathematically absurd. The minimum—maximum range of trick expectancy may vary from zero to 2+ honour-tricks, if partner has passed, and even more, if partner has not yet bid. Besides, partner's distribution may vary to extremes even with few honour values and there are some blank hands which are easily worth two or three Aces. The only mathematical solution of this perplexing problem lies in the following *sliding scale* of expectancies:

When partner has made no bid the player should assume in partner's hand 2 winners, if vulnerable, and 3 winners (sometimes 4), if not vulnerable.

Furthermore, when vulnerable, the trump tricks in the player's hand must be *sure winners*—that is, calculated with reasonably unfavourable rather than with 'average' trump distribution. The scientific reason for this Rule is based

upon the scoring value of the game. If you are vulnerable and gamble on 2 tricks, but find partner trickless, your loss is 500 points, but *your opponents very probably could have scored a game at their own bid*. Similarly a gamble of 3 tricks when not vulnerable is worth while. Your main advantage lies in forcing the enemy to meet with aggressive competition, and to bid up their hands to the breaking point; at the same time you elude the demon of Penalties.

This Rule of Two and Three is one of the most important in the Culbertson System and, if rigidly adhered to, will save thousands of points, especially for advanced players. Throughout the system it is the basis of all Pre-emptive bids, Defensive Overcalls and Secondary bids. It definitely eliminates such Bridge atrocities as unwarranted penalties of 1400 points or more, and even a penalty of 1000 points is possible only because of a very bad break; at the same time, the Rule of Two and Three brings the ultra-conservative player out of his morose and costly mood of impending disaster, and ensures that hands are bid 'to the hilt', especially when not vulnerable. Assume, to illustrate the Rule, that your partner passes, Second Hand opens with one spade, and you hold:

♠ 7 ♥ A Q 9 4 3 ♦ Q J 10 2 ♣ 8 6 2

If not vulnerable, an Overcall of two hearts is justified because the hand contains about 5 winners including 3 to 4 winners in the heart suit, if we assume average distribution. Adding 5 to 3, the 3 being your maximum expectancy in partner's hand, gives 8 tricks, which is your proposed contract. If you are vulnerable, an Overcall of two hearts would be unjustified and a bad gamble. You now should assume *unfavourable* heart distribution, and therefore can count but 2 to 3 winners in hearts and, at the most, 2 in diamonds. With probably only 4 winners in your hand, you are 2 tricks short of your *safety margin*, since you cannot gamble on more than 2 tricks in the Dummy and your proposed contract requires 8 tricks. And yet nearly every player and especially most of the experts (who because of their ability to play the hand are prone to over-gamble)

would overcall with this hand, little realizing that even with a tolerably good break the hand may be easily set 900 points.

Again, to bid four hearts on a hand such as

♠ 7 ♥ K J 8 7 6 5 ♦ A 8 4 ♣ 9 6 4

simply because the opponents make a shut-out bid of three spades is suicidal. It will usually happen that the opponents are presented with the choice of a large penalty or bidding four spades. It must be realized that brilliancy, aggressiveness and audacity of inferences will pay dividends only if built upon a fundamentally and *continuously* sound background. The only permissible exceptions to the Rule of Two and Three occur: (a) when making an Opening one-bid; (b) when opponents are afraid or do not know how to double for penalties; (c) when the bidding clearly indicates that partner, even though he passed, holds a fair hand; and (d) when a sacrifice is advisable to stop a Slam.

When it is reasonably certain that opponents will not score game or part-score, or when opponents' strong bidding clearly indicates that partner may hold a blank, the *safety margin* of expectancy is reduced as follows:

1. If vulnerable—1 playing-trick in support.
2. If not vulnerable—2 playing-tricks in support.

HOW TO RAISE PARTNER'S DEFENSIVE OVERCALLS (ALSO PRE-EMPTIVE AND SECONDARY BIDS)

The Responding Hand knows that partner gambles on 2 tricks when he is vulnerable and on 3 tricks when he is not vulnerable. *Therefore the Responding Hand has one Raise for each winning trick in excess of 2 and 3, respectively.* Among winners are counted honours, trumps and ruffing possibilities, and also an easily establishable side suit. To illustrate, an opponent opens with one no-trump and partner (vulnerable) overcalls with two hearts. Third Hand bids two spades and you hold:

♠ 7 ♥ K 9 6 2 ♦ K Q 10 8 ♣ J 10 3 2

A four-card trump length headed by a King is worth more than 1 trick. The ♦ K Q, length in diamonds and clubs, together with a ruffing possibility in spades, would produce

better than 2 sure winners. Partner's two-heart bid guaranteed about 6 winners, and you have about 4 winners. Therefore, you have two Raises and should bid four hearts. Even with a bad break, your maximum loss should be 1 trick. You have but one Raise if partner is not vulnerable, for then he not only promises just 5 winners but the winners are not as solid as might be expected if he were vulnerable.

Assume South bids one no-trump, and your partner, West, overcalls on South's left with two hearts. Both sides are vulnerable. Your principal inferences are as follows:

My partner has not doubled for a Take-out. He is not prepared for a possible spade response by me, or is not quite strong enough in honour-tricks—otherwise he would have doubled one no-trump. Quite likely he has not a solid heart suit, or he would have passed hoping to trap the opponents. He must have at least 6 sure winners, for he must be prepared for a possible bad distribution and a Penalty Double by opponents; the maximum he should safely expect from me would be 2 winners. Therefore with a hand such as:

♠ A 9 6 2 ♥ K 8 4 ♦ 5 ♣ Q J 10 7 2

West's two hearts should be raised to four hearts. The hand has at least 4 winners—1 in spades, 1 in hearts, 1 in diamonds and 1+ in clubs.

HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FIGHTING AND PURELY DEFENSIVE STRENGTH

The Defending Hand uses different kinds of *bidding situations* to show (a) minimums, (b) strong or very strong hands and (c) strong hands with freakish distribution.

1. Minimum defensive strength is shown by simple Overcalls. Hands with long suits but with little outside strength are shown by *Jump Overcalls*.¹

¹ Experience has demonstrated that, with the present scoring, Jump Overcalls are the most effective when used as *aggressive defence* rather than to show very strong hands. For strong hands, the Take-out Double and the Immediate Overcall in the opponents' suit remain available. In the Culbertson System the Jump Overcall was used originally to show :powerful two-suiter.

2. Strong hands are indicated by:

- (a) Take-out Doubles; and
- (b) Immediate Overcalls in a suit previously bid by the opponents.

The strength of hands shown by simple and Jump Defensive Overcalls ranges from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 honour-tricks.

The strength of hands shown by Take-out Doubles and Overcalls in the opponents' suit ranges from 3 honour-tricks upward—in other words, types of hands that would originally have justified an Opening bid. Even many advanced players commit the error of making a simple Overcall (and thus conveying an inference of average strength) when the hand contains strength equivalent to at least a fair Opening bid. For instance, if South bids one heart and West holds:

♠ QJ 3 ♥ Q 4 ♦ A QJ 9 8 6 ♣ A 5

to overcall with two diamonds leads nowhere; but a Take-out Double followed by a diamond bid, if necessary, may easily lead to something worth while.

With hands rated stronger than 3 honour-tricks, the Defending Hand should not make a Defensive Overcall, but should as a rule double first, even when holding a good biddable suit, especially when not vulnerable. If he simply overcalls defensively, partner will draw the negative inference that only average strength is indicated.

For instance, consider this situation:

♠ A K J 3 2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> NorthEast</div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> West South </div> </div>	♠ Q 5 4
♥ 6		♥ 9 7 4 2
♦ A 10 5 4		♦ QJ 8 3
♣ K 8 3		♣ 6 2

Opening bid
one heart

West should double first and bid spades later. If West

Experience has demonstrated that the bid, though perfect theoretically, is one of those lazy bids that works on rare occasions and then is in everyone's way. It is hoped that, in its new job, the bid will not go to another extreme and over work.

simply overcalls instead of doubling, partner (Fourth Hand) will visualize something like this:

♠ A J 10 3 2 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ K 4 3

With his hand he will support a spade bid if the Second Hand first shows strength by doubling, and quite correctly refuse to support the bid if the Second hand merely overcalls. This is an important point.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR DEFENSIVE OVERCALLS

Two points must be kept in mind by the Defending Hand. It is futile to wait for hands which are as good as Opening bids, because such hands are not common *after* an opponent has opened the bidding. Therefore, the requirements for Defensive Overcalls are considerably below the standard for Opening bids. Otherwise many opportunities for energetic and effective defence would be lost. On the other hand it must be remembered that even suit bids of one, when doubled, can result in heavy penalties.

All Overcalls should show about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the hand, to offer a minimum of protection to partner should he eventually double for penalties or take out partner's bid. Overcalls on practically trickless hands, even when sound distributionally, are quite unsound from the standpoint of future bidding. With a hand such as:

♠ 5 ♥ 10 9 8 7 6 5 ♦ Q J 9 8 7 4 ♣ —

a player should pass an opponent's spade bid even though he may lose another opportunity to bid by so doing.

The minimum requirements for Defensive Overcalls of 'one-odd' are as follows:

1. When not vulnerable: 4 playing-tricks or winners, including about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, gambling on 3 tricks in partner's hand. A four-card biddable suit may be bid.
2. When vulnerable: About 5 sure playing-tricks or winners, including at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in all, and gambling on 2 tricks in partner's hand. A four-card suit bid is dangerous against keen opponents who may double,

unless the suit is quite strong. When considering a vulnerable Overcall of one, the first question to ask is: 'Can I defend my hand against a possible Penalty Double of one?' It follows that vulnerable suit Overcalls of one are strength-showing bids, practically equivalent to a Take-out Double.

The minimum requirements for Defensive Overcalls of 'two-odd' are as follows:

1. When not vulnerable: A fair five-card suit (about 4 trump tricks) and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the hand.

2. When vulnerable: $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 sure winners and a strong five-card or longer suit (at least 4 trump tricks) with about 2 honour-tricks in the hand. The Defending Hand must not, as a rule, gamble on more than 2 playing-tricks in partner's hand.

An Overcall of two or higher should not, as a rule, be made on four-card suit lengths. This enables partner to support Defensive Overcalls with but three low trumps (although even here caution is needed).

EXAMPLES OF DEFENSIVE OVERCALLS OF ONE

After an Opening bid of one heart the Second Hand should:

Pass, vulnerable or not, when holding:

♠ Q 10 8 7 6 ♥ 3 ♦ Q 9 8 7 6 5 ♣ 6

or

♠ Q 10 8 6 5 4 ♥ 8 3 ♦ Q 9 2 ♣ 6 4

because these hands contain less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks each, and should be bid only after a previous pass.

Overcall with one spade *if not vulnerable* when holding:

♠ Q J 10 7 6 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ 8 3 2

because this hand contains $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and a biddable five-card suit.

Overcall with one spade *if vulnerable* when holding:

♠ Q J 10 7 6 4 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ 10 8

because this hand has 5 sure winners.

Overcall with one spade *if not vulnerable* when holding:

♠ A 10 7 6 4 ♥ 9 4 ♦ K 8 7 5 ♣ 8 3

because this hand has a biddable five-card suit and 2 honour-tricks.

Overcall with one spade *if vulnerable* when holding:

♠ A Q J 9 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A Q 8 7 ♣ 8 3 2

because this hand has a fair four-card suit and 2 honour-tricks. It is true that if partner holds a blank and opponents double one spade, this hand can be set in excess of the value of the game opponents could score. Such occasional loss, however, will not outweigh the general advantage of bidding rather than passing.

EXAMPLES OF DEFENSIVE OVERCALLS HIGHER THAN ONE

After an Opening bid of one spade the Second Hand should:

Pass, *whether vulnerable or not*, when holding:

♠ 4 3 ♥ A Q 9 2 ♦ K 8 7 5 ♣ 8 3 2

With rare exceptions, a bid higher than one should not be made on four-card suits.

Pass, *whether vulnerable or not*, when holding:

♠ 4 3 ♥ Q 9 8 7 6 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ 8 3 2

because in this hand the five-card suit is too weak to bid.

Overcall with two hearts *if not vulnerable*, but pass *if vulnerable*, when holding:

♠ 6 ♥ A Q 10 5 4 ♦ K J 6 3 ♣ 8 6 2

Overcall with two hearts *if vulnerable* when holding:

♠ 2 ♥ A Q J 7 4 3 ♦ A 9 6 2 ♣ 8 5

because this hand practically guarantees 6 tricks, of which 4 are sure trump tricks.

After the opponents have bid up to two spades:

Overcall with three hearts *if not vulnerable*, but pass *if vulnerable*, when holding:

♠ 8 2 ♥ A K 8 5 4 2 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ 7 5

This hand shows between 5 and 6 tricks.

Overcall with three hearts *if vulnerable* when holding:

♠ 7 ♥ A K Q 8 5 2 ♦ K Q 10 4 ♣ 9 4

This hand shows about 7 tricks.

After the opponents have bid up to three spades:

An Overcall of four hearts should show roughly a trick better than in the last two specimen hands just preceding.

JUMP DEFENSIVE OVERCALLS

If South opens with one spade and his opponent, West overcalls with three hearts, such an Overcall is a *Jump Defensive Overcall*.

In the Culbertson System of 1933 a new Jump Defensive Overcall has been developed after a thorough test in order to give more scope for aggressive defence. For this purpose the Defending Hand has two effective bids—the Take-out Double and a Forcing Immediate Overcall in the opponents' suit.

A Jump Overcall shows but little outside strength and a long trump suit. In the Defending Hand it has the same function as a Pre-emptive game bid in the Opening Hand. The player gambles on 2 tricks in partner's hand, if vulnerable, and on 3 tricks if not vulnerable. The requirements for a Jump Overcall of *three* after opponents' Opening one-bid (no-trump or suit) are the following:

1. If not vulnerable, less than 3 honour-tricks and, in all, 6 winners or playing-tricks.
2. If vulnerable, less than 3 honour-tricks and, in all, 7 sure winners or playing-tricks.

A Jump Overcall of *two* will correspondingly show 5 and 6 winners.

A Jump Overcall of *four* will correspondingly show at least 7 and 8 sure winners. It may be argued that after an opponent has made an Opening bid, the cat is out of the bag and a shut-out or Pre-emptive bid serves no useful purpose. In many instances this is not correct. A shut-out bid, if conducted on a sound basis, will frequently throw a monkey wrench into the opponents' bidding machinery and will successfully interfere with their Approach bids and responses. An opponent's Opening bid more often than not will not fit his partner's hand. It is precisely to prevent the opponents from finding too easily another and better fitting

bid that the *Jump Defensive Overcall* has been developed. Even a *Jump Overcall* of two—for example, an *Overcall* of one heart with *two spades*—may serve a useful purpose if the opponents are vulnerable. At least it prevents the Third Hand from using a *Forcing Take-out* of three.

To illustrate a Jump Defensive Overcall:

An opponent bids one heart, the Second Hand is vulnerable and holds

♠ A Q J 10 7 6 4 2 ♥ — ♦ K 9 3 2 ♣ 7

The proper and very effective *Defensive Overcall* is four spades.

Again, South bids one heart and West (not vulnerable) holds

♠ A Q J 9 6 4 ♥ J 10 9 3 ♦ 5 3 ♣ 7

The proper bid is *two spades!*

RAISING THE JUMP OVERCALL

Deduct 2 and 3 winners, respectively, according to whether you are vulnerable or not vulnerable, and for each added value you have a *Raise*.

CHAPTER XV

THE DEFENDING HAND (*Continued*)

II. TAKE-OUT DOUBLES

HANDS CAN be broadly classified in two groups:

(1) Hands which are more valuable at one's own bid, or in support of partner's bid.

A hand such as

♠ K J 10 3 ♥ 7 ♦ A K J 8 4 2 ♣ 7 5

because of its distributional values, is worth a great deal more in support of partner's bid of spades, or at one's own diamond bid, than if played against opponents' strong heart suit as trump.

(2) Hands which are more valuable when used to score penalties against opponents.

A hand such as

♠ 7 3 ♥ K 10 9 6 3 2 ♦ A 8 4 ♣ 7 5

is worth a great many tricks when played against opponents' heart bid, and but 1 trick in support of partner's spade bid.

Take-out Doubles¹ are used with hands belonging to the first group.

Penalty Doubles² are used with hands belonging to the second group.

Of course, there are a number of mixed hands with which it is doubtful whether a greater profit can be obtained from a Penalty Double or by playing for the score below the line. The fact remains that, long before the introduction of conventional Take-out Doubles, expert players were more or less subconsciously playing the Take-out Double in fact.

The Penalty Double informs partner that the Doubler *prefers* to play the hand defensively against opponents. It is a valuable piece of information and frequently carries the additional inference that his hand is of little, if any, value in support of partner's bids. Therefore, after such an indirect warning, partner should be careful not to disturb the Penalty Double without the most weighty reasons for his action.

The Double for a Take-out usually informs partner that the Doubler holds a strong hand, and that the distribution of his hand is not suited for defence against the opponents' bid, but that it may be eminently suited for attack in support of partner's best bid. A Take-out Double may at times be made to trap an unwary opponent into rebidding his suit, so that the Doubler may double it for penalties. If an opponent bids one heart and you hold

♠ K Q 6 ♥ J 10 9 7 ♦ A K Q 7 ♣ 10

the best bid is to double *as though for a Take-out*. If the opponent rebids to two hearts, this bid can be doubled for penalties.

¹ Called 'Informatory' Doubles by some players; however, since all Doubles are informative in some degree, the term 'Take-out' Double is more precise.

² Called 'Business' Doubles by some players; the term 'Penalty' Double however has the advantage of being more specific.

Partner of the Doubler should be very careful not to leave in the Take-out Double, unless his hand is of such unusual strength (especially in the adverse trump suit) that, in spite of Doubler's indirect warning, a much larger penalty is assured than a possible game score for his own side.

It is important, therefore, to know precisely whether partner's Double means 'Leave me in' (Penalty Double), or 'Take me out' (Take-out Double).

In the first place, all Doubles—even Doubles of one in a suit—are meant for penalties *after partner has made any kind of bid*. For instance, suppose your partner opens with one heart, and Second Hand bids one spade. You now double. Your Double is not a Take-out but a Penalty Double. Since your partner has already given the principal information about his hand through his Opening bid, there is no need to force him to speak again.

Paradoxical as it may seem, a Penalty Double of a one-bid, is, as a rule, more profitable than a Penalty Double of a Slam bid. Another important advantage of a Penalty Double of a one-bid is that it may definitely locate and punish a 'psychic' (bluff) bid of one (no-trump or suit) when made by the opponents.

To illustrate:

NORTH (Dealer)

EAST

SOUTH

1 ♠

1 N T

Double

If East is foolish enough to indulge in a 'psychic' one no-trump with something like:

♠ 7 2 ♥ K 8 3 2 ♦ Q 10 7 6 ♣ J 4 2

and South should hold, say,

♠ K 9 2 ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ A J 9 3 ♣ A 6

it is obvious from the Rule of Eight that the *combined* twenty-six cards of opponents cannot contain more than 2 bare tricks. Hence a penalty disastrous to them is inevitable. (A similar situation occurs with the *Penalty Pass*.)

A Take-out Double must be *immediate*—that is, it must be made at the *first opportunity* to do so. It follows that, even if partner has not bid, a Double of one-odd is still for penalties, if not made at the first opportunity to do so. For instance,

REQUIREMENTS FOR TAKE-OUT DOUBLE 231

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	Pass	1 N T	Pass
Pass	Double		

West's Double is for penalties because he failed to double immediately. This distinction permits the laying of an effective trap against players who use an artificial system such that the Responding Hand may not pass an Opening one-bid. It is also quite effective against players who, in their One Over One responses, bid no-trump on almost blank hands.

All Doubles of two no-trump also are Penalty and *not* Take-out Doubles. In such situations, if the Doubler's hand is strong enough to force partner to bid, even though he be quite weak, it is, as a rule, strong enough to defeat the adverse two no-trump or higher suit bid for a penalty which will be at least equivalent in points. Finally, all Doubles of *four or higher bids* are also for penalties. It follows that the field of Take-out Doubles is restricted to one no-trump and one-, two- and three-bids in a suit, and is further limited to situations arising when partner has not bid and the Double is immediate.¹

DISTINCTION BETWEEN PENALTY AND TAKE-OUT DOUBLES PENALTY DOUBLES DEFINED

Any Double is meant for penalties:

1. When partner has bid, be it even a suit bid of one.
2. Even when partner has not bid, if the Double is not made at the *first opportunity*.
3. When the doubled bid is two no-trump, or four in a suit.
4. When a player opens with one no-trump (not a suit), and doubles any Overcall on the next round.
5. When a player opens with a two-bid, and doubles any Overcall on the next round.

TAKE-OUT DOUBLES DEFINED

Any Double is meant for a Take-out:

¹ In addition, two other bids are, in effect, gigantic Take-out Doubles: the Forcing Four No-trump Overcall and the Forcing Immediate Overcall in the opponents' suit.

PARTNERSHIP LANGUAGE

1. If the doubled bid is one no-trump or one, two (when not Forcing) or three in a suit (provided partner has passed or has made no bid and the Double is immediate).

2. If a player opens with a suit bid of one (not no-trump), partner passes and one (or both) opponents overcall with a suit bid (or bids) of one or two.

3. When a player repeats his Take-out Double after partner has passed, provided his second Double is of a suit bid not higher than three.

A Double of a Double (a Redouble) is equivalent to a bid, and therefore any subsequent Double is for penalties.

To illustrate:

PRINCIPAL PENALTY SITUATIONS

SOUTH (Dealer)	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	1 ♠	Double (Penalty)	
SOUTH (Dealer)	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♣	No bid	1 N T	No bid
No bid	Double (Penalty)		
SOUTH (Dealer)	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 N T	Double (Penalty)		
SOUTH (Dealer)	WEST	NORTH	EAST
4 ♥	Double (Penalty)		
SOUTH (Dealer)	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 N T	No bid	No bid	2 ♥
Double (Penalty)			
SOUTH (Dealer)	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 ♥	3 ♦	No bid	No bid
Double (Penalty)			

PRINCIPAL TAKE-OUT SITUATIONS

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥ or 1 N T	Double (Take-out)		

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	No bid	2 ♠	Double (Take-out)
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
3 ♥	Double (Take-out)		
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♦	No bid	2 ♠
Double (Take-out)			
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Double (Take-out)	3 ♥	No bid
No bid	Double (Take-out again)		
	<i>but</i>		
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Double (Take-out)	3 ♥	No bid
4 ♥	Double (Penalty)		

The following situation, though technically a Penalty Double, should be inferred as a Take-out Double:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	No bid	2 ♥	No bid
No bid	Double (Take-out)		

Here, although West failed to double at his first opportunity, it is obvious that he does not expect to penalize opponents. But

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	No bid	No bid	1 ♠
1 N T	Double!		

is decidedly for penalties. The Doubler obviously passed to lay a trap.

Whether the Double is for penalties or for Take-out, a great deal must be left to partner's imagination and card sense. Either kind of Double merely expresses a *preference*

and is not a command. Consequently, the often delicate question of whether a Penalty Double should be taken out or a Take-out Double left in (even though partner may prefer the other course) will be decided by the diagnosis of the peculiarities of the individual hand, the state of the score and partnership psychology.

The definition of Take-out Doubles also applies when the bidding has been opened by the Doubler himself, but his Opening bid has been overcalled by one of his opponents *except when the Doubler's Opening bid is one no-trump*. Here the Opening bidder's Double of a subsequent adverse bid is made to collect penalties in spite of the fact that partner has not bid and the Double is of a suit bid of not more than two.

Suppose the Dealer bids one no-trump when holding

♠ A Q 7 ♥ Q 10 9 8 ♦ A 9 2 ♣ A J 10

If Dealer is overcalled with two spades by an opponent and doubles, such a Double is meant for penalties. The reason is that no-trump bids show well-distributed strength, but suit bids may easily show concentrated strength with unbalanced distribution. If, after an Opening no-trump bid, partner is unable to make some sort of free bid, it is useless to force him to bid, and it pays best to regard Doubles in such situations as *Penalty* Doubles. After an Opening suit bid, however, it may easily be assumed that the distribution of the Opening Hand is quite unbalanced and valuable at some suit bid, however weak, made by partner, so that it pays best to regard Doubles in such situations as *Take-out* Doubles. Here a Take-out Double is used as a powerful Rebid (from 4 to 5½ well-distributed honour-tricks), and the Doubler is prepared to have his Double left in by partner with somewhat less strength than usual.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

It must be remembered that the Doubler manoeuvres, so to speak, under the guns of the enemy, who has already shown Opening bid strength. There is always a possibility that Doubler's partner may hold a blank hand. *Furthermore, a Take-out Double is a strong invitation to partner to take the aggressive even with a hand which is but little better than the mini-*

num. To double a one heart bid originally with a hand such as ♠ A 10 7 4 3 ♥ — ♦ K 8 6 5 2 ♣ Q 7 3 on a wild hope that partner may 'fit' with spades or diamonds, is suicidal. Partner will be completely fooled as to the minimum honour strength of the hand and attempt an aggressive campaign only to find his bombs charged with sawdust. Such Doubles are permissible only after an original pass, as *Secondary* or *Distributional Take-out Doubles* and when the situation precludes the possibility of a severe penalty. The Take-out Double is a beautiful weapon both for attack and defence provided the hand is well cemented with honours and in addition is buttressed with good distribution. Therefore the Doubling Hand should, as a rule, contain a definite minimum of honour strength (usually stronger than an Opening bid) and, *in addition*, be strong enough *distributionally* to stand by partner's weakest response without serious loss; or should *have another bid in reserve*.

The minimum honour-trick requirements to justify a Take-out Double are as follows:

- (a) 3 honour-tricks divided in three suits; or
- (b) 3 honour-tricks divided in at least two suits and a fair biddable suit containing 4 trump tricks.

These requirements are honour-trick minimums. With (a), if the doubled bid is one no-trump, the Doubler must hold in addition four spades and four hearts, or at least 4 honour-tricks—not vulnerable, and if vulnerable the hand should be strong in intermediates. If opponents bid one of the majors, then the Doubler practically guarantees a minimum of four cards in the other, unless he has a good suit of his own, as under (b). A Double of an opponent's Opening bid of one no-trump with the following hand is not only suicidal but futile,

♠ A 6 4 ♥ K 7 3 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ J 10 9 4
as it leads into a blind alley.

A Double made with (b) requirements is a *strategic* Double. Its main object is to convey the inference that the *hand* is *somewhat stronger in honour-tricks than a mere Defensive Overcall would show*. For instance, after an Opening one no-trump bid, when Second Hand holds

♠ A K J 10 3 ♥ 4 ♦ A Q 5 3 ♣ 8 4 2

the procedure is *to double*. If partner responds with two hearts or two clubs the Doubler can 'rescue' with two spades. If partner responds with two diamonds, a two spade bid should still be made; in the meantime valuable information has been obtained. If partner passes the Double for penalties, the one no-trump will probably be severely defeated. These situations could not all occur if the Second Hand, instead of doubling an opponent's one no-trump, as a *preliminary* to bidding two spades, merely overcalled with two spades. A simple Defensive Overcall presents to partner an entirely different picture of the hand. It usually denies 3 honour-tricks or better, and indicates a hand of purely distributional worth. Accordingly, the gauge of partnership Raises and Take-outs is quite different.

There is a rather sharp distinction between Take-out Doubles of suit and no-trump bids. With Take-out Doubles of no-trump bids, the Doubling Hand should consider the fact that vulnerable no-trump bids are not only considerably stronger, but that the strength is distributed in three or all suits. Furthermore the *position* of the no-trump bidder (to the left or to the right of the Doubler) is an important consideration.

It is even more important to distinguish between doubling when vulnerable and doubling when not vulnerable. There is a great difference in the resultant penalty should the Doubler strike, as happens at times, a blank hand held by his partner. Consequently, although the 3 honour-trick requirement remains the same, the Double when vulnerable should show even stronger intermediates in majors or, if it be a strategic Double, a fairly powerful escape trump suit.

With very weak support in the majors (especially spades), and lacking a good biddable suit, it is much better not to double at all, even though the hand does contain $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. For instance, if the Opening bid is one no-trump and Second Hand holds

♠ 5 ♥ K Q 6 4 ♦ A J 4 3 ♣ A J 5 2

a Double for a Take-out would be atrocious, especially if

Second Hand is vulnerable, as partner may easily be forced to respond with two spades, not only on a very weak four-card spade length, but also with a very weak hand. The Doubler is now trapped, with no escape, and a heavy penalty will probably result whatever he bids. For this reason the Doubler must, as a rule, either be prepared to support a possible weak response, especially in major suits, or at least have a strong substitute suit in his own hand.

RE-OPENING THE BIDDING WITH A TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

After an opponent has opened the bidding an Overcall by Second Hand is often dangerous and a Take-out Double futile even with hands containing as much as $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 honour-tricks. Holding:

♠ A 9 5 ♥ K J 3 ♦ A 7 4 2 ♣ K 10 5

a vulnerable Double of an opposing bid of one spade might result in a loss of 1,400 points if partner's hand is a bust. Likewise, holding:

♠ Q J 9 5 4 ♥ K J 6 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ 4 2

a player is well content with an Opening bid of one spade and has no desire to play the hand unless the partner has sufficient strength to make a Defensive Overcall or a Take-out Double.

Taking into consideration such situations as these it often becomes wise for Fourth Hand to reopen the bidding with a Take-out Double on much shaded requirements if Third Hand also passes the original bid. The Fourth Hand in thus re-opening the bidding may shade the requirements for a Take-out Double to as little as 2 honour-tricks in two suits. This Double, of course, is based upon the assumption that partner has perhaps passed great strength in the opponents' bid suit. It follows then that such tactics are unsound when the player holds more than three cards of the opponents' trump suit.

With this strategic reopening of the bidding, Fourth Hand is creating an opportunity for his partner to make a Penalty Pass if his refusal to overcall or double was based upon the

fact that the Opening bid was in his longest and strongest suit.

When a bid of one no-trump has been passed by the player next to speak, as well as his partner, a Double may be made by Fourth Hand with the same light honour-trick requirements buttressed perhaps by one or more plus values. The partner of the Doubler in such a situation, however, should not pass without about $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, unless he has a strong suit to open and enough re-entries to ensure establishing it and bringing it in.

THE PROCEDURE OF DOUBLER'S PARTNER (FORCED AND FREE RESPONSES)

As with most other bids in Contract, the success of the Take-out Double hinges upon logical and precise inferences conveyed in the responses of Doubler's partner.

Partner's responses are *forced*, when the opponent on the left of the Doubler passes. When the opponent on the left of the Doubler intervenes with a bid, the partner of the Doubler is released from *obligation* to respond and his responses are *free*. A free response is equivalent to a strength-showing response.

Except with strong hands, which justify a Penalty Pass, there is no excuse whatever for passing partner's Take-out Double on some such silly grounds as, 'Partner, I really was too weak to bid', or 'Partner, the opponents could not go game.'

Any loss which may result from being forced to bid on a blank hand—and such loss is always problematic—is much to be preferred to the loss which almost certainly follows when opponents are allowed to play the hand at the doubled bid, which enables them to reap the reward of doubled trick values and bonuses for making extra tricks. More important still is the fact that such a pusillanimous pass completely demoralizes partner, who will not easily forget nor quickly forgive such a violation of sound partnership tactics.

With erratic players, who are in the habit of passing Forcing bids and Take-out Doubles on some mysterious

theory of their own, one is compelled, willy-nilly, to resort to abnormal and roundabout methods of bidding, preferring the lesser evil of guessing to the greater evil of submitting to the ignorant stubbornness of the player across the table. Partners of the type here described reduce the efficiency of the partnership almost to the zero point.

MINIMUM (FORCED) RESPONSES TO A TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

The Doubler, for safety, always assumes that his partner holds only a minimum—until he learns otherwise. That minimum generally consists of a type of hand *which contains less than 1 honour-trick*, but mathematically it does not follow that he will hold a complete 'bust'. It is best, therefore, to assume as partner's minimum about $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick in the hand, unless opponents' exceptional bidding definitely points toward a zero. Doubler's partner confirms the assumption of a minimum if he bids no higher than is strictly necessary.

With hands containing $\frac{1}{2}$ or less honour-trick, or no five-card suit length, partner's proper procedure is as follows:

1. *Bid the longest suit.* If the longest suit has been bid by an opponent, bid *the lowest ranking minor suit*. For instance, with

♠ 9 7 4 3 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ 10 9 4

if an opponent has bid one spade and partner doubles, the response is two clubs. The weaker the hand, the more imperative it is to bid.

With hands containing a semblance of values, between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 ♥ honour-tricks or a biddable suit, partner's procedure is as follows:

1. *Choosing between a major and a long minor:*

Bid a four-card major when it is headed by at least a Knave in preference to any five-card minor; but bid a six-card minor in preference to a four-card major of but average strength.

2. *Any no-trump response shows certain strength:*

If holding a stopper in the suit adversely bid, the response is one no-trump—provided the hand contains at least 1 honour-trick; when the hand does not contain 1 honour-

trick the proper response is a bid of any suit, even a three-card minor. A no-trump response to a Double is never made on a blank hand. Few things are more dangerous in Contract than a one no-trump Take-out with a blank hand.

3. *Choosing between a major suit and a no-trump:*

If holding a choice between a four-card major suit and a no-trump, the major suit response is, as a rule, to be preferred.

STRENGTH (OR FREE) RESPONSES TO A TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

A hand containing even 2 honour-tricks is a fairly strong hand, considering that partner has made a Take-out Double which shows at least 3 honour-tricks. The combined hands will have 5 out of 8 honour-tricks, and, if the Doubler holds more than 3 honour-tricks and favourable distribution, a game is in sight.

Partner informs the Doubler that his hand is better than the minimum, and contains at least 2 honour-tricks or 1½ honour-tricks if holding biddable suit lengths, by making, whenever possible, a *Jump response*—a higher bid than necessary. It is, of course, not a Forcing bid, and if a major suit is thus shown there may be *as little as* Q J 3 2 or K 10 3 2 in the suit. However, Jump responses with minor suits or after opponent's one no-trump, which will carry the bid to a range of three, should show greater strength and length. The Responding Hand must always visualize the probability that the Declarer is prepared for a major suit response; when a fair major four-card suit is not available, the strength response should be either

(a) two no-trump, if holding a stopper in the adversely bid suit; or

(b) a *Penalty Pass*, if the adverse bid is one no-trump.

To illustrate:

East can make a Jump two spade response to partner's Double of one heart with

♠ Q J 7 2 ♥ 7 ♦ A 7 5 3 ♣ K 6 5 4

or with

♠ J 10 6 3 ♥ 6 ♦ A J 3 2 ♣ A Q 3 2

This is one of the rare situations in Contract in which partner is justified in making a Jump bid on a non-biddable trump suit. Such a procedure is quite safe because the Doubler must logically infer that (a) partner is merely attempting to show better than the minimum hand, and (b) he certainly does not hold a very strong suit (or hand), for otherwise he would make a double Jump. Jump responses after an opponent's one no-trump should be avoided, when vulnerable, except on strong hands.

With

♠ K J 6 ♥ Q 6 ♦ K 9 8 4 ♣ K 7 6 3

if an opponent bids one spade and partner doubles, the response is two no-trump; but if an opponent bids one no-trump, and partner doubles, the response is a *Penalty Pass*.

A Take-out Double, when followed by a Jump bid *by the Doubler* in his own suit, is the nearest thing to an absolutely Forcing bid in Contract. Partner must respond unless holding an absolute blank and no distributional possibility of any kind.

To summarize:

1. A simple (non-Jump) Take-out of the Double is a minimum response, showing $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks or less.

Examples of minimum Take-outs, assuming partner has doubled an Opening bid of one heart:

Bid one spade when holding:

♠ Q 10 9 7 ♥ 3 ♦ K 10 9 4 3 ♣ 6 5 4

Bid two diamonds when holding:

♠ 9 8 5 3 ♥ 7 ♦ Q 8 6 5 4 ♣ 10 9 2

2. A Jump Take-out is a strength response, showing about 2 honour-tricks and (a) either a rather weak major suit such as Q J 8 2 and at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks outside or (b) any stronger trump suit and proportionately less strength outside.

Examples of Jump Take-outs, assuming partner has doubled an Opening bid of one heart:

Bid two spades when holding:

♠ Q J 5 4 ♥ 8 ♦ K 7 6 3 ♣ A 8 6 2

Bid two spades when holding:

♠ A 10 9 7 4 ♥ 6 4 ♦ K 7 6 4 ♣ Q 10

3. A double Jump Take-out of the Double shows a nearly solid trump suit (at least 4 sure trump tricks), and about 2½ honour-tricks in all.

Examples of double Jump Take-outs, assuming partner has doubled an Opening bid of one heart:

Bid three spades when holding:

♠ A K 7 6 5 4 ♥ 9 ♦ K 10 8 4 ♣ 7 2

Bid three spades when holding:

♠ Q J 10 8 6 5 ♥ 10 ♦ A J 4 ♣ Q J 3

With stronger suits or hands, a direct game response or even a Slam try is made.

The following hand, taken from the Culbertson-Lenz Match, illustrates the delicate but extremely precise mechanism of Take-out Doubles and Responses.

A BRILLIANT RESPONSE TO A TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

Both sides vulnerable

Dealer—North

Part-Score—North and South 30

Hand No. 109

Rubber No. 16

Deal No. 13

Mr. Lenz

♠ 8 7 6

♥ 10 9 5

♦ 10 2

♣ A K Q 10 7

The Author

♠ 9 5 3 2

♥ A J 3

♦ A Q 6

♣ 8 3 2

	North	
West		East
	South	

Mrs. Culbertson

♠ A K Q 4

♥ K Q 8 7 4

♦ 5 3

♣ 6 4

♠ J 10

♥ 6 2

♦ K J 9 8 7 4

♣ J 9 5

Mr. Jacoby

The Bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
		1 ♣ ¹	Double ²
Redouble ³	1 ♠ ⁴	No bid	2 ♠!
No bid	4 ♠!! ⁵	No bid	No bid
No bid			

Opening Lead: ♣ K by North followed by a switch to a diamond.
Result: Made six.

Analysis of the bidding:

¹ A bold but justifiable bid by Mr. Lenz.

² Mrs. Culbertson, with better than 3 honour-tricks and two strong suits, properly doubles rather than show either of her suits.

³ A bluff Redouble to inhibit the opponents' bidding. It was easily read. (See the Rule of Eight.)

⁴ This bid shows no strength other than a four-card spade suit, as a pass here would show great strength in clubs, and belief in the bidder's ability to defeat the one club contract redoubled. (See Bidding Under a Redouble.)

⁵ As West holds most of the high cards in diamonds and hearts, and as her opponents are marked with the clubs, Mrs. Culbertson's Double and free Raise of spades can only be based upon tremendous strength in spades. West has a count for a practically certain game on the basis of elimination (Plastic Valuation). He knows that East holds at least ♠ A K and ♥ K Q, the minimum that would justify a Take-out Double. Besides, a Raise to two spades by East adds ♠ Q or ♠ J 10. It still would be too weak to justify both the vulnerable Double and a Raise. Therefore East must hold not more than two clubs and probably five hearts, in which case West can discard his two possible losers in diamonds. All this gives the following reconstructed composite hand to West:

♠ A K Q 9 2 ♥ A K Q J 2 ♦ A ♣ 8 3

West also knows that if but three spades is bid *partner will probably pass*. Hence a bid of four spades. Therefore, the apparently wild jump to four spades here, instead of being an uncertain speculation, is entirely sound and a brilliant demonstration of the response to a Take-out Double in the Approach-Forcing System. This bid was severely criticized by the press as a flagrant example of an insanely risky bid. There was, however, method in the madness.

THE PENALTY PASS

When the partner of the Doubler expects to defeat the

doubled contract by an appreciable amount, he should pass for a penalty rather than make a Take-out. A *Penalty Pass* after partner has doubled one no-trump is justified with as few as 2 honour-tricks in the hand, especially if opponents are vulnerable.

A hand such as

♠ J 10 7 ♥ A 9 8 4 ♦ K 10 3 2 ♣ K 4

in conjunction with the 3 honour-tricks shown by partner's Double will account for 5 out of the 8 to 8½ honour-tricks in all four hands. The Opening no-trump bidder holds about 3 honour-tricks. It follows that the Dummy is either blank or has at the most 1 honour-trick. Therefore the no-trump will be defeated by at least 3 tricks, or 450 points not vulnerable, which is the equivalent of the game.

A *Penalty Pass*, however, after partner has doubled an Opening *suit bid* of one, should be emphatically avoided. Only hands, with such extraordinary trump length in opponents' suit that practically 4 sure trump tricks are guaranteed, justify a pass.

A hand such as

♠ 7 ♥ K 9 8 6 5 2 ♦ 8 7 6 5 ♣ 10 6

is a bad pass over partner's Double of an adverse Opening one heart bid. A two diamond Take-out is in order. The hand is too weak for one no-trump.

A hand such as

♠ 8 ♥ QJ 10 9 7 6 ♦ 6 4 3 2 ♣ A 5

offers 4 sure trump tricks and justifies a minimum pass, although it is still doubtful whether the penalty not vulnerable will justify it.

This sharp distinction between the Penalty Pass of no-trump and suit bids is explained by the fact that in suit bids the opponent is usually able to make small trumps by ruffing adverse honours—thereby decreasing the penalty score against him—but at no-trump it is difficult for the opponent to establish any low-card tricks if he has only minimum honour strength.

The great value of the strategic Double will be very much diminished if partner of the Doubler will not practically guarantee to take out suit Doubles.

THE PENALTY PASS V. 'PSYCHICS'

The Culbertson Take-out Double in conjunction with the *Penalty Pass* has definitely broken the back of original bluff or 'psychic' no-trump bids and of even more naive bluff bids with a void or singleton in the suit.¹ As a result, the epidemic of loose, crude 'psychics' has now ended; indeed, advanced players soon gave them up in favour of the more subtle psychological strategy fully explained in the chapters on Bridge Psychology.

The *Penalty Pass* is most effective against Opening bluff or very weak no-trump bids. The defence is somewhat more complicated when the opponent opens the bidding with a 'psychic' suit bid of one, especially in a major, and Second Hand holds length and strength in that suit. The procedure is as follows:

Assume South opens with one spade. If the opponent, West, overcalls with two spades, the inference is that he has a powerful hand but no spades. *If West first makes a Take-out Double and then follows any of partner's responses with a bid of two spades, the inference is that West holds a strong spade suit and that South has probably made a 'psychic'.* If West bids three spades after his own Double he shows a very strong spade suit. To illustrate:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Double	No bid	2 ♦
No bid	2 ♠! or 3 ♠!		

West shows either a good or a powerful spade suit.

¹ The only occasion when a 'psychic' bid of a suit, of which the player holds a singleton or a doubleton, is justifiable occurs when a player prepares for a Slam bid, and tries to stop a lead in that suit. But to bid originally one spade with a singleton spade, merely to prevent an opponent from bidding the suit, is one of the oldest and most tried methods of committing self-strangulation in Bridge.

BIDDING AFTER OPPONENT'S TAKE-OUT DOUBLE
OR REDOUBLE

No Bridge question is more vexing and confusing than the procedure of a player bidding immediately after an opponent's Take-out Double of partner's Opening bid or an opponent's Redouble of partner's Take-out Double. When should he bid and when should he pass? And what should be the inferences?

Almost every player has his own idea about it, and as a result partnership bidding degenerates into a wild guessing contest. The solution of this, as of any other problem in the Culbertson System, is based on the strictly logical inferences arising in expert play against *expert competition*. There are two bidding situations, each requiring a different procedure, as follows:

1. Procedure of the player bidding after the Take-out Double of partner's Opening one-bid (suit or no-trump).
2. Procedure of the player bidding after a Redouble of partner's Take-out Double.

In each case partner has made a strength-showing bid and is faced by adverse strength-showing bid or bids. Assuming normal bidding, partner and the opponent who doubles must necessarily hold together at least 6, and probably 7, or more, honour-tricks, leaving for the combined Third and Fourth Hands at the most 3, and probably fewer, honour-tricks. Nevertheless, since Third and Fourth Hands hold the balance of power, final success or failure will largely depend on their tactics.

Procedure After an Opponent's Take-out Double

The player who speaks immediately after the opponent's Take-out Double may hold: (1) a hand containing $2\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks (strength); (2) a hand containing between 1 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks (average); (3) a hand containing 1 or less honour-trick (near blank or blank).

1. *When holding $2\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks the player should, almost always, immediately redouble the opponent's Take-out*

Double. With good distribution, even 2 honour-tricks suffice for a Redouble.

Such a Redouble is a necessary preliminary to any subsequent bidding and the only logical way of showing additional strength to partner, or of ferreting out an opponent's weak and 'psychic' Take-out Double.

Only exceptionally, and for strategical reasons, should a player bidding after a Double pass with a strong hand.

If partner's Opening bid is one in a suit, the Redouble of opponent's Take-out Double *does not necessarily guarantee any trump support in the bid suit*. The Redoubler may even have as little as a singleton in partner's suit.

The Redouble of a Take-out Double signals to partner that the Redoubler holds the balance of honour strength, and, therefore, the *partner of the Doubler* must hold practically a blank or, which is equivalent, the Take-out Double is a psychic. The balance of strength shown should be at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

To illustrate:

First Hand (Dealer not vulnerable) bids one no-trump, which accounts for about 3 honour-tricks.

Second Hand doubles for a Take-out, which accounts for about 3 honour-tricks more.

Third Hand holds, say:

♠ A 10 7 4 ♥ A J 8 5 ♦ K 10 3 2 ♣ 5

This hand is worth $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. Since the first three hands already disclose about $8\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, it is obvious that partner of the Doubler (Fourth hand) has either a total blank or $\frac{1}{2}$ honour-trick at the most.

It follows that any bid of two, when made by the Fourth Hand, will probably play for a heavy loss in penalties unless the combined hands happen to strike a trump bid with length in both hands.

A Redouble *informs* partner that the hand is fairly strong in honours, and *asks* him either to double the adverse bid if holding a trump trick, or to pass up the bid to the Redoubler, to give him in turn an opportunity to consider a Double for penalties. The Redoubler practically guarantees to take some action other than a pass when the bidding comes round to him again.

	♠ A Q 5 4	
	♥ Q J 10 6	
	♦ A 3 2	
	♣ 5 4	
♠ K J 9 8	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> North East </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> West South </div> </div>	♠ 10 7
♥ A 7 4 3		♥ K 9 8 2
♦ Q 5 4		♦ K J 10
♣ A J		♣ K Q 10 2
	♠ 6 3 2	
	♥ 5	
	♦ 9 8 7 6	
	♣ 9 8 7 6 3	

(Dealer)

<i>The Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 N T	Double	Redouble!	

No matter what bid is made by South or North, the combined hands will be doubled and heavily penalized.

The same procedure applies when the Opening bid doubled is one in a suit and is redoubled by the partner of the Opening bidder (Third Hand). One must keep in mind that such a Redouble shows merely the honour strength, *not trump support*.

A Redouble is also the most effective weapon against a psychic or a weak Take-out Double. Here the Rule of Eight will prove to be infallible, and if consistently followed will guarantee to cure definitely the most chronic amateur user of 'psychic' Take-out Doubles.

2. *If the hand contains a biddable five-card or longer suit, and in all from 1+ to 2+ honour-tricks, it should be immediately bid over the Double.*¹

For instance:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
1 ♠	Double	2 ♦

¹ With no biddable suit but about 2 honour-tricks, one no-trump should be bid.

North holds:

♠ 7 4 3 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ A Q 7 5 2 ♣ 5 3

Exceptions: The player also bids immediately after the Double, (a) with only 1 honour-trick when a one-bid is sufficient to overcall partner's Opening suit bid; or (b) when holding a six-card major suit headed by a King or Queen-Ten. In the latter case North's subsequent Rebid of the same suit (instead of three no-trump or four spades) is a 'Sign-off' bid, as in Regulation Take-outs.

With hands containing one or more Raises (but always less than 2½ honour-tricks), give the full value of Raises at once and, if not vulnerable, shade them to the limit. With

♠ Q 8 7 4 3 2 ♥ 2 ♦ Q 10 8 7 5 4 ♣ —

bid four spades over a Take-out Double of partner's one spade, vulnerable or not vulnerable.

With hands containing less than 2½ honour-tricks, but a nearly solid six-card or longer suit, make a shut-out bid. About 6 winners are required for a Jump bid to three and 7 winners for a Jump bid to four (expecting 3 tricks in partner's hand).

All Jump Take-outs or Raises are shut out and not strength-showing bids after opponent's Double. The fact that a player does not redouble is an inference that he is not strong. With

♠ K J 10 9 7 4 3 ♥ — ♦ J 10 9 7 ♣ 3 2

bid four spades over opponent's Take-out Double of partner's one club.

3. *With a weak hand containing less than 1 honour-trick, the player should pass over the opponent's Take-out Double.* Under these conditions a 'rescue' is decidedly a losing bid. For instance, with

♠ 3 2 ♥ J 10 7 3 2 ♦ Q 8 4 3 ♣ 10 3

the player should pass the Take-out Double of partner's Opening one no-trump. If very weak bids are allowed after the Double, then partner can never distinguish clearly between hands containing a modicum of strength (about 1½ honour-tricks) and near-blank hands. Consequently, even when unusually strong, he will not venture a Rebid and will thus miss many games. (See S.O.S. Redouble, page 252.)

As a general rule, except for Redoubles with hands containing $2\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks (sometimes but 2 tricks), *the procedure when bidding after a Take-out Double is practically the same as though no Double were made.* This does not mean, of course, that the Double should be completely ignored, since by it a hand of considerable strength has been indicated.

Procedure after a Redouble of Partner's Take-out Double

Even more baffling is the problem of what to do after an opponent redoubles *partner's Take-out Double.*

SOUTH	WEST (partner)	NORTH	EAST
1 N T or 1 ♥	Double	Redouble	?

The writer has been almost alone in insisting that in such a situation East *cannot pass unless he is prepared to defeat the one no-trump or one in a suit redoubled.*

In fact, *the weaker East's hand is, the more urgent it is for him to bid.* The argument advanced by so many experts that, after North's Redouble, East need not bid since West can 'take himself out' is entirely fallacious for the following principal reason: Suppose North makes a bluff Redouble, which is excellent strategy when a pass by East has no penalty significance. North may hold something like

♠ 3 ♥ 5 4 ♦ QJ 10 9 7 6 4 ♣ 9 4 3

and make a 'psychic' Redouble of one no-trump with absolute impunity. He is now quite certain that either East or West must rescue *him*, for they will never really suspect his bluff until too late. If East passes with a good hand his partner, West, must 'rescue himself', not realizing that North made a bluff Redouble, for he naturally assumes a weak hand with East. If East holds a strong hand he is forced to bid, for otherwise West will assume a weak hand and a likely game or even Slam may be lost. *But if East bids, the best result—a severe penalty at one no-trump redoubled—is automatically killed.*

Frequently, South will innocently add to the opponents' confusion by doubling their contract on the strength of North's Redouble. That would be exactly in accordance with North's plan; he now bids three and, if necessary, four

diamonds, and thus spikes the enemy's guns. Thus, the opponents lose an opportunity for a heavy penalty and, in addition, will often be bluffed out of the game. Unless a pass in this situation means a *Penalty Pass*, the partnership is helpless against a bluff or a weak Redouble. The best argument is to adopt a policy of psychic Redoubles (always provided an 'out' is available) against players who do not use a *Penalty Pass* after a Redouble. They will either be forced to change their defence or quit Bridge. The writer, in his lifelong experience against master players in various parts of the world, has developed this technique of psychic and weak Redoubles of Take-out Doubles, and it has worked so well that the opponents have been forced to adopt a *Penalty Pass* as the only effective defence. But even if a Redouble is not psychic, it may easily be weak or distribution may be quite unfavourable to the Redoubler, and the opportunity to defeat severely an opponent's contract of one (in a suit or no-trump) may be definitely lost. Finally, if the Redouble is strong it is more important than ever that the Take-out Doubler be informed, as far as possible, of partner's four-card length, however weak, which may fit in with his own distribution.

The proper procedure under a Redouble of partner's Take-out Double of one no-trump or one in a suit is:

Except with a strong hand the player must never pass. The player should, with only slight modifications, respond as though the Redouble had not been made, and as though he were responding directly to partner's Take-out Double.

He should make a *Penalty Pass* of opponent's one no-trump bid if holding $2\frac{1}{2}$ or more honour-tricks, or but 2 honour-tricks with intermediates and good distribution. He should only make a *Penalty Pass* of opponent's trump bid of one, however, if he holds from 4 to 5 sure trump tricks, and is reasonably certain of defeating the contract.

He should respond with one no-trump (if opponent opened with a suit) only on hands containing *at least 1 honour-trick including a stopper*.

With hands containing *less than 1 honour-trick* and a worth-

less four-card major he should, whenever possible, respond with a four-card minor unless the major suit response leaves the bidding at one-odd.

Finally, if the only four-card length is in the suit bid by the opponent, the player should respond with 'two clubs', especially with a worthless hand. To illustrate:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Double	Redouble!	?

East must bid two clubs on:

♠ 10 9 7 3 ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ 4 3 2

The reader can rest assured that there is method in this apparent madness.

THE S.O.S. REDOUBLE

SOUTH (Dealer)	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 N T or 1 ♥	Double	No bid	No bid
Redouble! (S.O.S.)			(a Penalty Pass)

A Redouble by the Opening bidder following a Penalty Pass is an S.O.S. (help! help!) Redouble and *unconditionally Forcing* on partner, who must respond with a bid of his longest suit. The inference is obvious that the Redouble is not made on unusual strength but in the hope of extricating himself from an apparently desperate situation. To leave the S.O.S. Redoubler in the lurch is almost worse than to ignore the pitiful little cries of a baby lost in a snowstorm.

Many players commit the blunder of rescuing with a very weak suit the partner whose Opening bid has been doubled for a Take-out in an attempt to forestall a probable *Penalty Pass* by the fourth player. In most cases such a procedure merely makes matters worse and eliminates the possibility of the Fourth Hand's bidding after all. The proper use of the S.O.S. Redouble obviates this necessity, for, if the Opener wishes to be rescued, he can make the S.O.S. Redouble—always provided his partner is at least of average skill.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DEFENDING HAND (*Continued*)

III. OVERCALLS IN THE OPPONENTS' SUIT

CLOSELY RELATED to Take-out Doubles, but showing, as a rule, much stronger hands, is the Immediate Overcall in the suit named in an opponent's Opening bid.

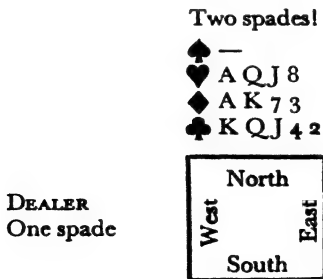
OVERCALLING IN THE SUIT BID BY THE OPPONENTS

The theory of Overcalls in opponent's bid suit is as follows:

With strong two-suiters and freaks, the Take-out Double should be avoided, as a rule. Partner is not only confused, but there is always the danger that partner may pass the Double for a penalty, or that opponents will attempt to crowd and shut out the bidding by Jump Raises or Pre-emptive Take-outs.

In situations like this, an Immediate Overcall in the adverse suit advantageously replaces the Take-out Double. It is both a strength- and a freak-showing bid—a gigantic Take-out Double.

The following situation illustrates the Immediate Overcall in a suit which has already been bid by an opponent:



With North's hand, the Overcall with a bid of two spades is entirely correct; similarly, if the hand contained in lieu of one small club a *singleton spade*. This is one of the most beautiful inferential bids in Contract, and should be commonly used, whenever opportunity arises, along with other Forcing bids. This bid is absolutely safe and highly informative—assuming partner has at least a grain of common sense.

Originally, an Overcall in the opponents' suit meant a Slam try to show no losers in that suit; that is, the player making the Overcall showed the Ace, a singleton or a void in the adversely bid suit. In the Approach-Forcing System, a sharp distinction is drawn between the *Immediate* Overcall in the opponents' bid suit after an *opponent has opened* the bidding, and the same Overcall after *partner has opened* the bidding. An Immediate Overcall of opponent's Opening bid is by no means 'a Slam invitation', but an attempt to find the best game bid. The hand may easily *contain a losing singleton* in the opponent's suit. In fact, the Overcall may be used in three different situations, as follows:

(a) At a low stage of the bidding, by the Defending Hand (opponents having opened the bidding), as in the preceding example.

(b) At a low stage of the bidding, by the Responding or Opening Hand (partnership having opened the bidding), in place of a Forcing Take-out or a Forcing Rebid.

(c) In higher stages of the bidding, by any player. As a rule, the bid shows, in the higher stages of the bidding, that the hand guarantees control of the first lead of opponents' suit.

An Immediate Overcall in the opponents' bid suit, made by the Defending Hand, is a Forcing bid to game with the special meaning of a powerful Take-out Double. This bid shows a hand containing at least 5½ honour-tricks with a strong trump suit (4 sure trump tricks), or a hand containing at least 4 honour-tricks and very freakish distribution, with, usually, a void, the Ace or a singleton of the adversely bid suit. The total must be at least 8 winners. The player should always be

sufficiently powerful to be prepared to find partner with a blank hand.

In responding to an Immediate Overcall in the opponents' bid suit, it is not necessary ever to jump the response, whatever the honour strength held, as the bidding cannot die short of game. With this exception, the same procedure should be followed as used in responding to a Take-out Double. A no-trump response, however, does not necessarily imply 1 honour-trick, but it does show a stopper in the opponents' suit.

When the Responding Hand overcalls an intervening adverse bid in the same suit, instead of making a Forcing Take-out, the Opening Hand bids on much the same lines as when opposite a Forcing Take-out. (The Overcall in the opponents' suit is Forcing to game, exactly like the Forcing Take-out.) The one exception is the no-trump response, which must show a stopper in the opponent's bid suit.

The only instance, in which an Overcall in the suit bid by the opponents does not require partner to take out, occurs when a Take-out Double is made *first, followed by an Overcall in the opponents' suit*. In such situations, the Overcall in the adversely bid suit, far from being Forcing, or showing a void in the opponents' bid suit, actually *shows strength in that suit itself*.

For instance:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Double	No bid	1 ♠
No bid	2 ♥		

West's bid of two hearts shows a hand containing a strong heart suit. East easily infers that West is not now Forcing to game, for, if he had wished to do so, *he would have bid two hearts instead of doubling first*. Any response East now makes is free and must be based on the foregoing inferences. This use of the Take-out Double followed by an Overcall in the opponents' suit is an effective weapon against a psychic or bluff bid made by an opponent.

In conclusion:

Defensive Overcalls indicate biddable suits, and hands varying from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in total strength.

Jump Defensive Overcalls indicate less than 3 honour-tricks, and such total of winners as is required by the number of tricks contracted for, minus 2 or 3 tricks (according to vulnerability).

Take-out Doubles indicate hands with 3 or more honour-tricks, and either support in the majors or an escape suit bid.

Immediate Overcalls in the opponents' bid suit indicate at least 4 honour-tricks with freakish distribution, or at least $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks with a strong suit and not less than 8 winners in all, and show control of the first round of the bid suit.

Here again the Approach-Forcing System tolerates no arbitrary convention, but makes it possible for every bid to be reasoned out from the logic of bidding situations.

CHAPTER XVII

PENALTY DOUBLES

A DOUBLE is for penalties when

- (a) Partner has previously bid—even if the opponents' doubled contract is only one odd, or
- (b) The doubled bid is at least two no-trump or a four-bid in a suit.

SAFEGUARDS AND PROCEDURE FOR PENALTY DOUBLES OF ADVERSE SUIT BIDS

The 'Two Trick' rule: Any Penalty Double must be based on the expectancy of defeating the contract by 2 tricks. So-called 'sporting' or 'free' Doubles on a margin of but 1 trick are never advisable. Even when a game has been bid, a Double on a margin of 1 trick is bad practice, because it may enable Declarer to locate an important honour, or particularly a trump trick, and thus enable him to make his contract (by knowing how to finesse).

The 'Trump Trick' rule: Penalty Doubles of suit bids below a game contract should not be made unless at least 1 trump trick is held by the Doubler. This rule is a valuable safeguard against the invisible rocks of distribution. Especially when the bidding indicates that opponents hold a practically solid trump suit should one refrain from close Penalty Doubles based merely on side strength.

THE CULBERTSON PENALTY DOUBLE RULE

Add the minimum number of honour-tricks shown by partner's bids to honour-tricks (and trump tricks, if any, in the adverse suit) held in player's own hand, and subtract the total from 13. The balance will show the trick-taking limits of the opponents' contract. If now the player expects to penalize the opponents by at least 2 tricks—the minimum margin of safety for any Double—he may double when not expecting a greater gain at his own bid.

This all-important rule definitely solves the problem of doubling, and is based on strict adherence in partnership bidding to the Standard Table of Honour-Tricks and minimum requirements for various bids—especially Opening bids.

To illustrate:

Assume that the Dealer opens with one club and the Second Hand overcalls with one spade. The Third Hand, holding

♠ QJ 10 9 6 4 ♥ 8 5 ♦ A K 7 ♣ 9 4

has a sound Penalty Double of the one spade bid. There are 4 spade tricks plus 2 diamond tricks plus (somewhere) at least 2 taking tricks shown by partner—in all at least 8 *taking tricks*. It follows that opponents can make at the most 5 out of 13 tricks. If a player is able to choose between making a rubber game (which is worth 600 points), and defeating the adverse vulnerable contract by 2 tricks doubled (which is worth 500 points), the latter should be preferred. The same principle should be followed in other situations when the expected score at one's own bid is roughly equivalent to the expected penalty.

THE PROCEDURE OF DOUBLER'S PARTNER

Partner should leave in the Penalty Double, even though his hand is a blank, unless his hand contains an important factor not previously known to Doubler from the bidding or assumed by him.

Partner should take out the Penalty Double when his hand contains certain important elements that are presumably unknown to Doubler. Partner should take out the Penalty Double under the following conditions:

1. When the distribution is very unbalanced (freakish)—provided the Doubler is not aware of it.
2. When it is evident that partner's hand is worthless against opponents' bid—provided, however, that it contains some elements of support for Doubler's previous bid, and that the possible loss will not be serious.

3. When partner, in bidding, has seriously misled Doubler as to the nature of his hand.

THE PROCEDURE FOR PENALTY DOUBLES OF
ADVERSE NO-TRUMP BIDS

(Based upon the Rule of Eight)

A safe Penalty Double of an adverse no-trump is based upon a count of the honour-tricks in the Defending Hands. At no-trump, the ratio of tricks taken with honours to those taken with low cards is about 8:5.

If partnership hands can account for 5 honour-tricks, the adverse one no-trump will, as a rule, be defeated by 2 tricks. The combined hands should establish, in addition to honour-tricks, 3 low-card tricks—a total of 8 out of the 13 tricks.

If partnership hands can account for $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, the adverse *one no-trump* will be defeated by at least 2 tricks, and very probably by 3 tricks. The ratio of 'penalty expectancy' is proportionately readjusted in estimating the Doubles of adverse two and three no-trump bids.

But the count of honour-tricks for Penalty Doubles of no-trump bids must not be relied upon too absolutely. No-trump contracts can successfully be made with less honour strength when backed up by an established, or by an easily establishable, long suit. Time is the predominant factor.

In considering a Penalty Double of no-trump the player must, therefore, carefully ascertain whether the opponents hold long suits and, if so, how quickly such suits can be established. If the bidding discloses no five-card or longer suit, or if adverse suits are presumably doubly stopped, the ratio given on the preceding page applies, and the Penalty Double is sound.

(Examples illustrating the difference between Take-out and Penalty Doubles are given in Chapter XV.)

CHAPTER XVIII

SLAM BIDDING

IN CONTRACT, Slam premiums are the deserved reward for the most valuable of intellectual qualities—precision of thought. A successful Slam bid is the crowning culmination of the delicately adjusted mechanism of inferences that make up the Culbertson System of 1933. It is the decisive test of any system or any player.

Slam bids are the logical extension of the principles and methods governing game bids. They are a kind of super-structure of several storeys added to the building of inferences necessary to reach part-score and game contracts. The principal object of bidding is, of course, a game or a penalty that is worth while. Experience has proved that no convention such as artificial Ace-showing, which is used exclusively with Slam bids, can be introduced below the game stage of bidding without leading to hopeless confusion. The fact remains, however, that all Slam bids *indirectly* have their roots in lower bids and frequently begin even with a one-bid. A Slam bid, in order to be successful, must be built on a firm foundation of precise Opening bids and partnership responses. Even a slight lack of precision in the initial stages of bidding, such as a careless trump Rebid, suppression of a biddable suit in favour of no-trump, or a blusteringly over-confident two-bid, magnifies itself from round to round, growing from a whisper to a scream, louder and louder, until it shrieks into a disastrous Slam bid. The sins of the original round of bidding are visited upon the third and fourth generation of bids.

It does not follow that Opening bids should necessarily be strong—quite the contrary. Strong Opening no-trump bids, for instance, when made in preference to suit bids, are invariably vague as to distribution and are far more difficult for partner to visualize than light but precise minimum suit

bids. If a hand containing a suit bid be strong, the added strength can be shown more easily through Rebids. Partner can visualize any minimum, however high or low, so long as it is not vague.¹

What is required more than anything else in successful Slam bidding is precise information as to minimum and additional honour and distributional values indicated by Opening bids, Rebids and responses. Every little bid must have a meaning of its own.

Nor should the story of the same hand be told twice; in Bridge it is worse than boring—it is *costly* and creates bad Slam feeling. Practically all Slam bids depend on the *combined values of partnership hands*; hence, almost any bid should be treated as a potential Slam try. Every bid must be surrounded by a finely drawn network of positive and negative inferences; it must be treated like a delicate surgical operation in which not the slightest precaution is neglected. A Slam will then develop naturally and beautifully, falling of its own weight like ripened fruit—from the inexorable logic of the bidding situation.

I. MATHEMATICS OF SLAM BIDDING

A biddable and makable Slam occurs, roughly, once in less than three rubbers. These statistics are not as yet quite reliable, but the fact remains that through defective methods of bidding a great proportion of biddable and makable Slams is not bid at all, and a great number of other hands

¹ Light but sound Opening bids have a further advantage in that the initial stages of bidding are kept low, which is frequently impossible if partner originally passes better than average hands. For instance, if with

♠ A 9 8 4 ♥ A Q 3 2 ♦ 7 6 5 ♣ Q 4

a player passes not vulnerable, as Dealer, and his partner opens with one no-trump, the subsequent bidding will necessarily be blurred; in almost any system partner must respond with two no-trump, and he will probably never find out about the existence of a biddable four-card heart suit, nor can he get the beginnings of a precise count of the distribution of the hand.

are wasted on Slam bids which should never have been attempted.

Considering that the vulnerable Small Slam premium (750 points) is roughly equivalent to a vulnerable rubber and that the vulnerable Grand Slam premium (2250 points) is roughly three times the value of a vulnerable rubber, the effects of bad Slam bidding will be strongly felt in the score. A team which bids too many losing Slam bids or not enough winning Slam bids, cannot in the long run win against a pair who employ modern scientific methods of Slam approach. This is particularly true when the enormous Grand Slam premiums are considered.

The present Slam premiums are so computed as to be roughly equivalent to the total value of vulnerable or non-vulnerable games, so that, if a player has a choice between scoring a certain game and trying for a Slam, his loss will be about equal to his gain. For instance, a game is worth slightly more than 400 points. The non-vulnerable Small Slam premium is 500 points. Suppose now a player gambles for a Small Slam. If he makes it, he gains 500 points extra; if he makes but five-odd and is set 1 trick, his loss is the value of the first game, say, at spades (about 420 points) plus 30 points for the overtrick, plus a penalty of 50 points if undoubled, or of 100 points if doubled. Say that half the time he will be doubled, which gives us an average of 75 points, making a total of 525 points which he gambled to make an extra 500 points—offering a practically even chance to win twice as much or nothing.

It follows that, if the making of a number of small Slams hinges upon a successful finesse, mathematically, and all factors of partnership skill being equal, a player will gain in the long run as often as he will lose. *Actually a Small Slam should always be attempted if its success hinges on a finesse.* The reason is that frequently the finesse against a Queen may be taken in either hand after locating the Queen; at other times a finesse may even be eliminated through the establishment of a long suit, a ruff, a forced lead up to the Declarer or a squeeze play. The argument that a sure rubber is 'in the

pocket', and that the next deal may be unfavourable, does not hold. From the standpoint of luck each new deal is an independent event, offering in the long run exactly equal chances to either side, chances which must and will operate in accordance with the Law of Probability. The person who pockets his 'sure rubber' will be forced to put it up again at the next deal, and perhaps at odds which will not be so favourable. Only when playing with a weak partner against strong opponents is one justified in not trying for a Slam unless the probability is about two to one in favour of its success. Apart from the question of the delicate plays involved in many Slam contracts, the longer one plays with a weak partner against strong opponents the greater the chances of disaster. On the other hand, if two strong players are playing against weak opposition, it is to their advantage to try for a Slam, even on *slightly less* than a fifty-fifty chance. The inferior defence may help them, and should they be defeated the game still continues at odds highly favourable to them. The qualification 'slightly better' is used advisedly. It does not mean, of course, that the strong players should deliberately abstain from scoring games, or try to squeeze a luscious Slam out of a stone. Although the Ship of Fortune is most sensitive to the slightest movement of the rudder of skill, the most skilful skipper is not so foolhardy as to dilly-dally with the invisible rocks of distribution or such brutal obstacles as adverse Aces and Kings.

A Grand Slam bid, vulnerable or not vulnerable, is also justified if its success hinges upon a finesse or any other event that offers about an equal chance, always provided the factors of partnership and opposing skill are fairly equal.

For instance, when you are reasonably certain to make a rubber game and a Small Slam vulnerable, but find that a Grand Slam can also be made provided a finesse is successful: if you bid a Small Slam only, say, at spades, but make 13 tricks, you score 500 points for the rubber and game, 750 points for the vulnerable Small Slam, and 210 points for your seven-odd tricks—in all 1460 points. Had you bid a Grand Slam you would have scored in addition 2250 points less 750

(the premium of the Small Slam already counted) or 1500 points. In other words, you would have about doubled your gain. Suppose, however, that with some other hand you bid for a Grand Slam vulnerable and the contract is set 1 trick on a losing finesse. Your loss is now not only the rubber and Small Slam premiums, but an additional penalty of 200 points if doubled, and 100 points if not doubled (an average, say, of 150 points), making a total of 1580, slightly more than the 1500 additional points you gambled for by trying for a Grand Slam. Here, again, the fact that on close Slam hands the Declarer has greater control and more opportunity to use fine play, and the fact that all Slams are not defended perfectly, more than counterbalance all other considerations, including the possibility of losing a trick to the opponents through the ruff of the first lead.

In conclusion:

1. *Partnership and opposition factors being equal, a Small or a Grand Slam bid, vulnerable or not vulnerable, should be attempted whenever the making of the twelfth trick (Small Slam) or of the thirteenth trick (Grand Slam) depends on only one favourable circumstance, such as a finesse, offering about an even chance for success.*

2. *A Small or a Grand Slam should not be bid when it depends upon more than one 'fifty-fifty' circumstance, e.g. upon two finesses or a finesse coupled with a favourable break in the suit.*

3. *With an inferior partner and superior opponents, a Small or a Grand Slam should not be bid on an even chance, such as a finesse, but on a reasonable certainty offering about a two to one chance for success; with a superior partner against inferior opponents, a Small or Grand Slam bid should be attempted on slightly less than an even chance for success.*

2. SLAMS AT SUITS AND AT NO-TRUMP (THE STRUCTURE OF SLAMS)

A no-trump Slam, like any other no-trump bid, is built with two kinds of tricks—honours and establishable low cards in long suits. A trump Slam is built with four kinds of tricks—honours, trump tricks in the long trump suit, ruffs

in the Dummy and establishable low cards in other long suits.¹

It is obvious that a trump Slam bid is, as a rule, far more flexible, safer and richer in potential tricks than a no-trump Slam bid. At a suit contract, extra tricks are available through ruffs in the Dummy; low cards in long suits can be mobilized in time and brought in as tricks under the protection of the trump suit in the combined hands. Even the enemy's established suit can be held up for several leads until reinforcements in side suits are mobilized; a long side suit can be established through ruffs in either hand without the necessity of losing a single trick to an opponent's stopper or stoppers in that suit; opportunities for squeezes and end-plays are also much greater; finally, the entire hand does not hang upon a finesse which, if unsuccessful, offers a re-entry and precipitates a catastrophic avalanche from the opponents' established suit.

Theory and experience agree that a no-trump mania in Slam bids is as deadly as with Opening bids and responses. Hence the following principle should be strictly observed.

CHOOSING BETWEEN TRUMP AND NO-TRUMP SLAMS

With few exceptions all Small and Grand Slam bids should be made at the best suit bid, be it even a minor, rather than at no-trump.

Exceptions occur as follows:

(a) When the hands contain the necessary values, but lack an adequate trump suit. With adequate trump support, a four-card suit Slam bid should almost always be preferred to no-trump.

(b) When the selected trump suit may lose 2 tricks, and it is clear from the bidding that 12 tricks are available at no-

¹ The trump tricks in the long trump suit and the low-card tricks in other establishable suits are really of the same kind. They are separately classified for the purpose of Slam bids in order to emphasize the important fact that low trumps in either Declarer's or Dummy's hand serve as additional stoppers not available at no-trump.

trump. This may happen when the Dummy holds four small trumps of partner's second bid suit (major), but the bidding clearly indicates tops in other suits amounting to a strong probability of 12 tricks at no-trump.

(c) When (usually in Grand Slam bids) the bidding unmistakably indicates not only four Aces but one solid five-card and one solid six-card suit. This is in order to obviate, with extreme freaks, the danger of losing the first trick through a ruff by an opponent. It goes without saying that such a freak is extraordinarily rare unless Goulashes are played, and the *certainty* that two suits are solid is even rarer.¹

All in all, occasions when six or seven no-trump should be preferred to a trump Slam are extremely rare. The most scientific approach to a Slam is the discovery of the best trump bid.

Instances in which a player receives equal support for his four-card and five-card bid suits are far more common. In all such instances, the four-card suit should be preferred, leaving the longer suit as a side suit.

THE QUESTION OF THE TRUMP SUIT

The selection of an adequate trump suit for the combined hands is of even greater importance in approaching a Slam than with game bids. Many Slams, bristling with top cards, are poisoned by a miserable appendix in an opponent's hand, as J 10 8 7 2 of trumps or, more ignominious still, 10 9 4 3 2 of trumps. In order to avoid these deadly rocks of distribution, the utmost caution should be used in building up the trump inferences. A combination such as trump 9 7 6 2 or J 10 2, or even Q 3 2 in the Dummy, though technically 'adequate trump support', should be viewed, if not with alarm, at least with suspicion. Here, again, it does not follow that a Slam should not be contracted for with a four-card suit. Not to bid a four-card suit at all for fear of possible

¹ For this reason, occasions for using the four and five no-trump bids also seldom occur. How these two lazy, sleepy bids are put to work in a startlingly new and dramatic manner is explained in the following pages.

unfavourable distribution would be like jumping into the river to avoid the rain. It simply means that the most solicitous attention should be given to the careful construction of inferences that determine the trump suit.

In the Culbertson System of 1933, numerous safety devices are automatically available for the proper discovery of the best trump bid, but, in view of the vital importance of Grand Slam bids, the following new convention has been developed by the author to strengthen trump inferences.

A great number of makable Small Slams are lost simply because the partner holds but three small or even two small supporting trumps while his own suit has been denied by partner. He fears to contract for a Slam, not being certain that the trump suit contains no more than one loser. An even greater number of makable Grand Slam bids will be reached if partner can get the count of his partner's trump suit. (See the example on a later page.)

THE JUMP TRUMP REBID

A Jump Rebid in the same suit shows a six-card or longer suit containing not more than one loser, on the assumption of unfavourable but not extremely freakish distribution. The word Rebid implies, of course, that the suit has previously been bid by the player. For instance,

SOUTH

1 ♥
4 ♥!

NORTH

2 ♠

South's Jump Rebid does not necessarily indicate any additional honour values, but it does indicate a nearly solid trump suit. If South bids only three hearts over North's two spades, it is also a Rebid, but merely shows a fair six-card suit or even a strong five-card suit. The Jump Rebids are reserved only for six-card or longer suits containing not more than one loser, such as K Q J 10 8 4 or A Q J 10 8 6 3. The fact that in the foregoing example South, after North's Forcing Take-out, rebids directly to game, far from closing the bidding, constitutes *almost* an inferential force. It is

obvious that, after North makes a Forcing Take-out (which shows at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks), he will be much more encouraged to approach a Slam if he knows that South has a long and powerful trump suit.

Again, in the same example, if South responds with two no-trump to North's two spades, and North now bids four spades (thus shutting out the range of three spades or three no-trump) his Jump response, in turn, indicates an almost solid spade suit. This convention is generally used after Opening bids of one and after strength is shown by the Responding Hand. After Opening two-bids it can be used only *occasionally*, for situations will frequently arise when a Jump Rebid, even to show an almost solid trump suit, will shut out other and more valuable information. It follows that failure to make a Jump Rebid after Opening bids of one carries with it a *negative inference* that partner's suit may contain more than one loser, but not necessarily so after a Forcing two-bid. This Jump Trump Rebid Convention is invaluable in approaching Small and Grand Slam bids.

LEADERS AND MOBS

In the structure of cards, honour values represent the *quality* element. They are the aristocracy of the world of cards—the tops, the leaders. From the standpoint of the Time Factor in the struggle of suits, they furnish the indispensable stoppers and re-entries that not only stem the tide of the enemy's suits but mobilize and bring in the allied forces before the field is overrun.

And yet it is a gross error to state that Slam bidding (or even Contract Bridge) is largely a question of 'Aces and Kings'. As a matter of fact, Queens and Knaves, various 'plus values' and even Tens are almost equally important. *But of far more importance are the reserve battalions of establishable long suits and the narrow or impassable gorges of singletons and voids, dominated by the trump fortress in combined hands.*

Low cards represent the *quantity* factor. In the world of cards they are the anonymous 'masses', the raw material

from which are recruited and developed the future leaders of Small and Grand Slams. They are the pawns which become promoted to Queens.

Hardly any Slam or, for that matter, hardly any game, can be made without developing and cashing as tricks the low-card reserves. Honour values by themselves will not suffice except with the rarest of hands. It follows that almost any successful Slam bid must be based equally on honour and distributional (low-card) values.

A suit or a hand without honours is like a leaderless mob; and a hand without distributional values is like an admiral without a navy. The great danger of Grand Slam bids on distributions such as 4-3-3-3 and 4-4-3-2, however well stocked with honours, is that the final thirteenth trick is not available for lack of long suit values. On the other side, Slam bids, when based on a count of playing-tricks only, will frequently fail because of the Time Factor. The combined hands may total as many as 16 winners, but, regardless of that, two Aces held by the opponents are naturally of greater importance.

The 'cue-bidding' methods which concentrate mainly on showing Aces and sometimes Kings, though at the expense of distributional information, err at the one extreme; the school of thought that requires not so much the count of honour values as the count of the total number of tricks, errs in the opposite direction. The proper method is to draw precise inferences as to honour values, and, especially for Grand Slams, to locate scientifically all the Aces (see the Four-Five No-trump Convention), but at the same time to keep in mind the tremendous importance of distributional values.

SLAM INFERENCES

Two conditions are necessary before the *possibility* of a Slam bid can be considered, as follows:

1. The partnership hands must contain favourable distribution—an adequate trump suit, some other suit length and usually a short suit. In other words, the hand must have 'body'.

2. The combined hands must contain about $6\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks.

This is merely a general rule, and the number of honour-tricks that *warrant* a Slam will naturally vary according to the distribution in the partnership hands. With tricks due to absent suits, a Slam may be reached with 6 and even fewer honour-tricks; with 'flat-tyre' distributions such as 4-3-3-3 or 5-3-3-2, even $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 honour-tricks may not suffice; finally, if the distribution of one hand is unbalanced and that of the other hand is balanced, the number of honour-tricks required will oscillate between the extremes of freak and (the opposite) 'bodiless' distribution.

With these reservations, one may state as a general principle that, if a player can account, from the bidding, for $6\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks in the combined hands, together with a fair distribution, he is approaching the Slam Zone. It does not follow by any means that a Slam should be bid. In fact, the chances are that a hand containing but $6\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks will be defeated at a Small Slam bid, even if the partnership hands contain four Aces. With $6\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks there are 2 taking tricks outstanding, and if they are held by the opponents only 11 tricks are accounted for at best. Even if the player can trace 7 honour-tricks for the combined hands, he should still assume, in accordance with the Rule of Eight, at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks—say, an Ace-King—outstanding. In such a situation, the best he can hope for is a Small Slam dependent on a finesse. With $6\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, therefore, the player immediately considers a Slam possibility and, with this in view, *proceeds to explore further the distributional and added honour possibilities of partner's hand*. He has assumed a certain distribution and a certain minimum of honour-tricks from his partner's bids, which has enabled him to determine that the combined hands now contain at least $6\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. His next step is to determine through *partner's responses* whether partner has any added values. At the same time he is trying to convey similar information to his partner. There are, therefore, two distinct steps that lead to the Slam Zone:

(a) The player determines, from the Opening bid and responses, the distribution and honour-trick strength of combined hands.

(b) The player obtains, and conveys during *subsequent bidding*, added information as to the distribution and Rebid values of partnership hands.

THE RULE OF EIGHT IN SLAM BIDS

Count the number of honour-tricks shown by partner's bids. Add the total to the honour-tricks held in one's own hand and subtract from 8 or $8\frac{1}{2}$ (according to distribution). The balance remaining, if any, will indicate the possible maximum number of tricks the opponents can take. This principle must naturally be somewhat modified according to the specific bidding situation.

The Rule of Eight is merely a rough and ready method of determining the approximate Slam possibilities. It must be supplemented and frequently even replaced by Plastic Valuation (see Chapter VI) by which the possible losers of each suit are being gradually eliminated through the added values shown by partner's responses. In Plastic Valuation, each key card in each suit is estimated *individually*, and the total thus obtained gives the precise estimate of the possible remaining key cards in the opponents' hands. When the composite picture of the two combined hands accounts for 11 reasonably sure winners, the twelfth probable winner (dependent, say, on a finesse) and the thirteenth possible loser, the player has a Small Slam bid. Similarly, if the partnership hands indicate 12 reasonably certain winners and a play for the thirteenth, or, to put it another way, if it is reasonably certain that the opponents will not win any of the *first twelve* tricks, and the thirteenth hints at a finesse at the worst, a Grand Slam is indicated.

DUPLICATION OF VALUES AND FREAKS

The player must be warned against two dangers that frequently wreck a Slam bid:

1. *Duplication of Values*, a term coined by the writer to indicate a situation in which the player holds an Ace or an

A **K** in the suit of which partner holds a void or, sometimes, a singleton. The void enhances the value of the hand, leading to added Rebids or Raises, but, since the player's additional strength is also concentrated in the suit of which partner is void, the flanks of some other suit are apt to be widely exposed, leading to a defeated Slam bid.

2. With a freak hand it is futile to expect average distribution of one's trump suit.

The combinations formed by freaks diametrically reverse the normal and the abnormal, on the lines of what happens when a moving-picture film is reversed. Freaks exhibit the morbid pathology of Distributions. The monstrous is now the normal and the normal is the extraordinary. A common distribution like 5-3-3-2 becomes a museum piece, and a hand pattern such as 8-5-0-0 is as common as a leper in a colony of lepers. Freaks are useful as object lessons in the pathology of Distributions. To-day even an average player has an insight into the abnormal and its laws (which are the Laws of Symmetry established eight years ago by the writer). Freaks bring a touch of the fantastic into the drudgery of everyday deals, and it is possible that, through them, a new field for discovery is being opened up.

STRONG (DIRECT) AND MILD (INDIRECT) SLAM INFERENCES

Any strength-showing bid conveys indirectly a Slam inference. Among such bids are Forcing Take-outs, three no-trump Take-outs, Raises to game, all of which show a certain minimum number of honour-tricks, which, added to partner's Opening bid of one, assure game, and, if the distribution is favourable and rebid honour values are available, may lead to a successful Small or Grand Slam.

Any but the two no-trump (bust) response to partner's Opening two-bid is also a Slam inference.

The direct or *strong* Slam inferences are as follows:

1. The four and five no-trump Forcing bids. (See the Culbertson Slam method, page 274.)
2. Any free bid or response higher than a game contract,

except when made to the part-score. (See Forcing two-bids to the part-score.)

3. An Overcall in the opponents' suit by the side that has opened the bidding.¹ Such a bid guarantees the control of the first lead of the opponents' suit, but may have a loser in a subsequent lead, and shows either a void or the Ace of the suit bid by opponents.

4. Certain other Slam inferences are more or less strong, but probably the most important is a free bid in a major suit when higher than a game Contract, and the new Four-Five No-trump Convention. Such bids constitute an *invitation* to partner to contract for at least a Small Slam. It is in the meaning of the word 'invitation' that so much confusion arises. Some players construe it as a practically Forcing bid and others lean too far backward by requiring almost a full additional trick for a Slam bid. It must be remembered that a player who invites partner to bid six practically guarantees the contract of five in a major suit, or 11 winners in all. On the other hand, if he holds even slightly better than an even chance to make six odd, he would not leave the decision to partner and jeopardize a biddable Slam.

It follows that there can be but one precise meaning to the much-abused phrase, 'Slam invitation'. The inference is that a player expects to score a Slam, provided partner has a Rebid value equal to about a 'plus' value, or slightly better distribution than has been shown up to that point. A bid of five spades or four no-trump, for instance, is not so much a command to partner to bid six, as a warning that the hand is slightly deficient and requires, on partner's part, some additional slight factor to round out the Slam bid.

The great majority of major suit five-bid 'invitations' are now eliminated by the use of the new Four-Five No-trump Slam Inference. It will be seen here that this Slam Inference is the most important so far developed in Contract Bridge,

¹ An overcall in the opponents' suit, after the opponents have opened the bidding, is not a Slam invitation but the equivalent of a powerful Take-out Double. Such a bid may even contain a losing singleton in the opponents' bid suit.

and that all the other *Slam Inferences* revolve around it. It has resurrected two heretofore inert bids—four and five *no-trump*—and by breathing a new meaning into them it has definitely solved the problem of Small and Grand Slam bidding.

THE CULBERTSON SLAM METHOD

(THE FOUR AND FIVE NO-TRUMP INFERENCES)

Provided either partner has opened the bidding, the following inferences are in order:

1. *Any four no-trump bid is unconditionally Forcing, requiring partner to respond.* It shows either (a) any three Aces or (b) any two Aces and the King of any suit previously bid by either partner. The player should avoid jumping into a four no-trump bid so long as the game is not reached. In addition to the three Aces or two Aces and a King, the four no-trump must contain sufficient values practically to guarantee a contract of five-odd in some previously bid suit.

Partner's responses are as follows:

(a) If holding no added values for a six-bid, he should sign off with a lower ranking suit, provided such a suit was previously bid by either partner; partner will, of course, expect that such a suit may be quite unsatisfactory.

(b) If holding sufficient added values for a six-bid, but only one Ace in the hand, he should contract directly for six odd in a suit previously bid and assisted by the partnership; or in a suit previously called by partner, *when he holds adequate trump support*; or in his own suit, though it has not been assisted, if it is solid and requires no support from partner.

(c) If his hand contains two Aces or one Ace and the Kings of all previously bid suits, he must unconditionally respond with five no-trump, without regard to any other consideration. Thus a five no-trump response is obligatory in response to four no-trump whenever the player holds any two Aces.

2. *When, in the course of bidding, a five no-trump bid is made directly (without being preceded by a four no-trump bid by either*

partner), it is also unconditionally Forcing and shows at least three Aces with the King of a suit previously bid by either partner. A five no-trump bid indicates, of course, that the player has already made up his mind to contract at least for a Small Slam at some bid, and that in addition he is indicating the possibility of a Grand Slam.

Partner's responses are as follows:

(a) If holding no added values, he signs off with a bid of six in a suit for which he holds adequate trump support or in a suit which has been bid and assisted; if there is no such suit, he signs off in the lowest ranking suit that has been previously bid by the partnership. He may sign off (by bidding no more than six) even though his hand contains the fourth Ace, if no added values are held.

(b) If holding added values, including an Ace, he contracts directly for seven odd in a suit for which he holds adequate trump support; or he bids seven in a lower ranking suit that has been previously bid.

In signing off, when a choice is available between adequate trump support of partner's bid and a six-card or longer suit bid of his own, with not more than one loser, the player should, as a rule, prefer the latter. Six no-trump is not a Forcing bid but a regulation bid reserved for rare hands on which a Small Slam at no-trump is preferable to a Small Slam at a suit bid.

The Four-Five No-trump Convention is applicable after any strength-showing bid, and particularly after a Forcing Take-out of partner's Opening bid. It is not applicable after opponents have opened the bidding unless, of course, it becomes obvious during the bidding that the opponent's Opening bid was a 'psychic'.

ILLUSTRATING THE FOUR-FIVE NO-TRUMP CONVENTION

SOUTH

1 ♠
3 ♣¹

NORTH

3 ♥ (Forcing)
4 N T (Forcing)²

Analysis:

¹ The fact that South does not jump to four spades is a negative inference that he has no six-card or longer suit containing not more than one loser. He therefore has either a fair six-card suit or a strong five-card suit.

² North now jumps to four no-trump. He shows either three Aces, or, if but two Aces, the King of hearts or spades. He indicates that a contract of five odd either in hearts or spades is practically guaranteed, but we do not know as yet whether he is merely making a Slam attempt or is prepared eventually to bid six and even seven. The inferences conveyed by South's possible responses are of fascinating interest:

(a) If South responds with five no-trump (a Forcing response), he shows two Aces. In this manner, all four Aces are automatically accounted for. If South responds with five hearts, it is a Sign-off.

(b) If South responds with six hearts, he denies *two Aces* but shows additional Rebid values for a direct Small Slam bid. This is a beautiful inferential invitation.

Again:

SOUTH
1 ♥
4 ♥¹
7 ♥

NORTH
2 ♠ (Forcing)
5 N T (Forcing)²

Analysis:

¹ A Jump trump Rebid shows a near-solid suit.

² A five no-trump *bid*, as distinguished from a five no-trump *response* shows values that justify a six-bid, including at least three Aces and the King of hearts or spades.

Again:

SOUTH
1 ♥
3 ♠
5 ♦²

NORTH
3 ♦
4 N T (Forcing)¹
5 N T (Forcing!)³

All pass

Analysis:

¹ Four no-trump shows either three Aces or two Aces and the King of diamonds, hearts or spades.

² South signs off in a lower ranking suit. Partner knows that it

does not mean that he has any support for partner's diamond bid. Technically he may even have a void in diamonds!

³ *This bid shows four Aces in North's hand.* The four no-trump bid shows two Aces and a King, and, when followed by a five no-trump bid, it shows the other two Aces. In this manner, at last, a method has been found by which a player is able to show, without increasing the bidding, the four Aces in his own hand.

The Four-Five No-trump Convention is also applicable, after a Forcing two-bid, but only in certain instances and with certain modifications. The Responding Hand, for instance, to bid four no-trump requires from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 honour-tricks, *but does not necessarily guarantee two Aces.* The presence of at least two Aces, and usually even three Aces is naturally assumed from the fact that an Opening two-bid has been made. Nevertheless, there are occasions when the Four-Five No-trump Convention can be used to show a hand with four Aces, or when five no-trump may be used to show three Aces and the King of a bid suit. The point to remember is that the Responding Hand should not draw negative inferences from the fact that partner, after his two-bid, fails to bid either four or five no-trump.

Actual experience has already demonstrated that the Four-Five No-trump Convention tremendously increases the range of biddable Grand Slams, and, at the same time, helps the partnership to avoid the pitfalls of Grand Slam bids when the opponents are holding a winning Ace. It will also render the bidding of Small Slams much more efficient, through the use of precise Sign-off bids to avoid contracting for losing Small Slams. Experience has proved that the so-called cue methods of bidding, where demands to show individual Aces are made, are generally ineffective. Not only does the bidding mount up too rapidly, but to waste an entire round of bidding, merely to show an Ace, is to pay a heavy price in the suppression of valuable information on suit and hand distributions. The real trouble with cue bidding was that the writers and players tried to show their Aces in *retail* fashion; the author has conceived the idea of showing these same Aces in *wholesale* fashion. Not only that,

but to do so he has selected two of the bids which were particularly notorious for their laziness and inefficiency, and which, in the family of Culbertson bids, have really been black sheep.

The Four-Five No-trump Convention is now presented after practical and theoretical tests. Doubtless it will cause a great deal of confusion and comment, much of which will be unfavourable. At first hearing it may sound complicated, although, once understood, it is quite simple and certainly far simpler than any artificial bid to show an Ace. Slam bidding in itself is complex, and cannot be successful if attempted in papa-mama fashion. The fact remains that no two players who are not using this convention could successfully, and for a long time, compete against two players of equal ability who are making use of the Four-Five No-trump Convention. The author and his associates are even convinced that, in view of the great importance of Small Slam bids and the tremendous premiums for Grand Slams, no system of bidding can survive which does not make use of this method of Slam Approach. The only possible exception is the Vanderbilt (Combination) System.

HANDS ILLUSTRATING SLAM BIDDING

EXAMPLE I

♠ A K Q 9 8
♥ K
♦ K J 9 4
♣ 8 7 5

North	
West	East
South	

♠ 7 6
♥ A Q 4 2
♦ A Q 7 6 5
♣ A 9

The Bidding (East dealer):

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
1 ♦	No bid	2 ♠ ¹	No bid
3 ♥ ²	No bid	4 ♦ ³	No bid
4 N T ⁴	No bid	7 ♦ ⁵	No bid
No bid	No bid		

¹ A slightly shaded Forcing bid, justified by the almost solid spade suit and the plus value of the ♥ K.

² Showing the second biddable suit, and also disclosing a 5-4 distribution.

³ A deliberate underbid in order to give partner an opportunity of making the four no-trump bid. The bidding cannot die short of game.

⁴ The Slam convention. In view of West's Forcing bid and subsequent support in diamonds, East knows that the hand must contain a Slam at some bid.

⁵ West is now certain of a Grand Slam. He knows that East's bid must show three Aces. It cannot show two Aces and the King of a bid suit, because he holds all three Kings himself. The spade suit is solid enough to allow for the necessary discards, and East's diamond suit must be headed by at least Ace-Queen in order to justify the four no-trump bid.

Under any other system of bidding, the Grand Slam would always be doubtful, as West could never be sure that East held ♣ Ace rather than ♣ K Q J.

EXAMPLE 2

♠ Q		♠ A K J 10 9 6
♥ 7 6		♥ A 8 5
♦ A K Q 5 4		♦ 9 2
♣ A K 9 7 5		♣ 8 6

	North	
West		East
	South	

The Bidding (East dealer):

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
1 ♠	No bid	3 ♦	No bid
4 ♠! ¹	No bid	4 N T! ²	No bid
5 N T! ³	No bid	7 ♠! ⁴	No bid
No bid	No bid		

¹ This bid shows an almost solid spade suit with one loser at the most. West holds ♠ Q, the only possible loser.

² West's picture of the hand is complete. A Grand Slam is a certainty provided East holds ♥ A. To learn this, West bids four no-trump.

³ Showing two Aces.

⁴ A Grand Slam is a certainty. There can be no losers in spades and the diamond and club suits are certainly strong enough to allow for discards.

The key bid in this hand was the four spade bid by East. Many Grand Slams are missed because partner holds the missing singleton honour and is never able to raise. The Jump Trump Rebids is the only natural and logical way in which two partners can definitely determine that a suit is completely solid.

The Bidding (East dealer):

<i>WEST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>	<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>
1 ♠ ¹	No bid	3 ♥ ¹	No bid
5 N T ²	No bid	6 ♥ ³	No bid
No bid	No bid		

¹ West's Forcing bid is obviously justified.

² East is immediately tempted to leap to seven hearts. It seems almost certain that West's Forcing Take-out includes the ♦ A. However, the five no-trump bid is the safest method of approach, leaving West to bid seven if he holds one Ace.

³ *Signing off.* This bid denies the missing Ace.

This hand is an example of how the Four-Five No-trump Convention prevents the bidding of unmakeable Grand Slams. Without this 'wholesale' Ace-showing convention, it would be extremely difficult for East and West to keep out of a seven-bid.

West—Dealer

EXAMPLE 4

♠ A 6 2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> North </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> West East </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> South </div> </div> </div>	♠ K Q J 9 7 3
♥ A K		♥ 7 6
♦ A 5		♦ 4 3 2
♣ A K Q 9 8 4		♣ J 5

The Bidding:

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
2 ♣	No bid	2 ♠	No bid
3 ♣	No bid	3 ♠	No bid
4 N T ¹	No bid	5 ♠ ²	No bid
5 N T ³	No bid	7 ♠ or 7 N T ⁴	No bid
No bid	No bid		

¹ West knows that his partner has at least 1 honour-trick. However, there is no guarantee that the spade suit is solid. He must bid in such a way as to show his full strength, and at the same time leave the final decision to his partner.

² Again showing Rebid strength in spades. If East wishes to sign off, his proper bid is five clubs, regardless of his club holding.

3 This second bid shows four Aces. There is no danger of the hand being bid too high as a positive response has already been received.

4 Either bid is correct. West's bidding has been so strong that the Grand Slam cannot be in doubt. The ♣ J will undoubtedly solidify the rebiddable club suit, and East knows that his partner holds all four Aces.

This particular Slam might very easily be reached in other ways, but there can never be the degree of certainty which exists under the Four-Five No-trump Convention. East would always be dubious as to the location of one Ace, and West would always be afraid of a spade loser.

EXAMPLE 5

♠ A Q J 6	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> North South </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> West East </div> </div>	♠ K 3 2
♥ A Q 5		♥ K 10 6 4 3
♦ A Q J 3 2		♦ K 6
♣ 5		♣ A 4 3

The Bidding (West Dealer):

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
2 ♠ ¹	Pass	3 N T ²	Pass
4 N T ³	Pass	5 N T ⁴	Pass
7 N T ⁵	Pass	Pass	Pass

1 West has a fit in the heart suit and 4½ honour-tricks. He is sure that even though East's hand may be a minimum Take-out, there will be some chance for game.

2 East cannot rebid hearts, and does not wish to raise spades because West has shown a four-card spade suit by bidding diamonds first. Having tricks in all four suits, East chooses this bid as the best means of showing the strength of his hand.

3 The Slam convention.

4 Three suits have been bid, and East has the Kings of all of them. He therefore knows that West's four-notrump call was based on three Aces, and that West, not having the King of any bid suit, cannot misread his response.

5 How beautifully clear West's picture of the composite hand has now become! East's Ace will take care of his losing club, and East's three Kings make his other suits solid. The hand must develop 13 tricks.

EXAMPLE 6

♠ Q J 7 6 3
♥ A 7
♦ A K 10 6
♣ A 6

	North	
West		East
	South	

♠ A K 5 4 2
♥ 6
♦ Q 7 5 4
♣ K Q 9

The Bidding (West dealer):

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♠	Pass	4 ♠ ¹	Pass
4 N T ²	Pass	5 N T ³	Pass
7 ♠ ⁴	Pass	Pass	Pass

¹ East has not the necessary 3½ honour-tricks for a Forcing Take-out, but his Raise to four spades is also satisfactory since it is a Slam try.

² West accepts the Slam try by making a stronger one.

³ Since only one suit has been bid, and East holds the King of that suit, he knows that West's four no-trump call had to be based on the holding of three Aces. Consequently his five no-trump response shows one Ace and the King of the only bid suit.

⁴ West has an added value in ♦ K. He further knows that East holds ♠ A K, as well as additional values in high cards to justify his immediate Raise to four spades. It thus seems inconceivable that East's hand will not furnish either the missing high honours or an opportunity to establish discards. The seven spade bid is very sound.

EXAMPLE 7

North—Dealer
Neither side vulnerable

♠ 9 8 4 2
♥ 5 4 3
♦ Q 6 5
♣ 9 3 2

♠ Q 10 6 5
♥ A K 10 2
♦ 10
♣ A Q 10 4

	North	
West		East
	South	

♠ 7
♥ J 9 7 6
♦ 9 4 3 2
♣ K J 6 5

♠ A K J 3
♥ Q 8
♦ A K J 8 7
♣ 8 7

<i>The Bidding</i>	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♥	Pass	3 ♦ ¹	Pass	
4 ♣ ²	Pass	4 ♠ ³	Pass	
4 N T ⁴	Pass	5 N T ⁵	Pass	
6 ♠ ⁶	Pass	7 ♥ ⁷	Pass	
7 ♠ ⁶	Pass	Pass	Pass	

¹ While South lacks one essential for a Forcing Take-out—namely, a fit for partner's bid suit—his two biddable suits and 4 plus honour-tricks are ample compensation.

² Disclosing additional strength over that required by the Opening bid.

³ An Inferential Force as it compels a choice above the game level between the bid suits.

⁴ Disclosing the holding of ♥ A K and ♣ A.

⁵ South still holds unbid values.

⁶ Still uncertain of ♠ K, North cannot bid seven directly.

⁷ This bid reveals not only ♠ K but ♥ Q as well.

⁸ The Grand Slam has been safely reached in the best suit. Obviously, the combined hands do not have in excess of seven hearts or more than six cards in clubs or diamonds. Hence the hand should be played in spades, not only because of the greater trump strength but because of the greater ease in handling. Seven no-trump cannot be made.

Most of these hands were actually played at the Crockford's Club, New York, the famous temple of Bridge and, in a sense, a national laboratory of Bridge ideas, where most of America's master players regularly congregate, and where every new idea is submitted to the most exacting tests. Example 7 was bid and played by Mrs. Culbertson holding the North hand, and Mr. William J. Huske holding the South hand.

THE LEAD-DIRECTING DOUBLE

It is a sound general principle that Doubles of Slam contracts, when made with a view to increasing the penalty reward, are unsound, because players of any reasonable skill do not contract for Slams when they are more than 1 trick short of their goal, and very often extremely unbalanced distribution will make of no avail what were seemingly sure winners in the Doubler's hand. Even when the Slam seems

doomed to certain failure, the Penalty Double will frequently reveal the location of key cards and thus enable the Declarer to make an extra trick which will offset the increased bonus gained by the defending side. An additional reason for not doubling a close Slam contract is that the Double may conceivably permit the Declarer to make a doubtful contract since he has the Double to guide him.

Players—and especially master players—have realized these underlying truths. General recognition of them makes possible the *lead-directing Double* to convey certain definite inferences to partner and thus make probable a line of defence which would not otherwise have been adopted. The principles of the lead-directing Slam Double were first worked out in detail by Mr. Theodore A. Lightner, a member of the World Championship team, just before the 1933 victory of that team in the first match for the Charles M. Schwab Cup.

According to the lead-directing convention, *any Double of a Slam contract* (whether for six- or seven-odd) *warns the Doubler's partner NOT to make what would normally be his logical opening lead.*

When the Doubler has previously bid a suit, the Double should be construed as an imperative command *not* to lead that suit. When no previous bid has been made by the Doubler, his partner's selection of an Opening lead depends upon a close study of the bidding and the inferences which he may draw from it, such as the following:

1. A lead through a suit which Dummy has bid and Declarer has strenuously denied.
2. A lead of a singleton in a suit adversely bid.
3. An apparently unsafe lead from a tenace in a suit which has not been bid.
4. A lead of a suit bid by the opponents in which the leader has such length that he may infer a void in partner's hand.

The lead-directing Slam Double is designed to fit hands in which ordinarily the situation of the defending side ap-

appears desperate, but in which an unusual lead may defeat the contract thus:

East—Dealer	♥ —	} COLONEL BEASLEY
North and South	♦ 6	
vulnerable	♣ A Q 9 4	

THE AUTHOR

♠ 9 8 5
 ♥ A 10 8 7 6 5 2
 ♦ A 7 2
 ♣ —

MRS. CULBERTSON

♠ J
♥ 4 3
♦ K 10 9 8 5
♣ J 10 6 5 3

♠ 3
 ♥ K Q J 9
 ♦ Q J 4 3
 ♣ K 8 7 2

SIR GUY DOMVILLE

<i>The Bidding:</i>	EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
	Pass	Pass	1 ♥	2 ♥
	Pass	3 N T	Pass	6 ♠
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

At this point the author¹ knew he could assure the defeat of the contract by the use of a Penalty Double, the inference of which Mrs. Culbertson would have read without difficulty. Unfortunately, though the convention had been previously published, the American team had neglected to explain it in advance to their opponents. Fearing that use of the convention might unfairly handicap the opponents, the author, with an ominous feeling of impending disaster, refrained from doubling. It is interesting to note that only a club Opening will defeat the contract; if a diamond is led, Mrs. Culbertson will be squeezed on the eleventh trick. Despite the costly result of his decision, the author can never regret his refusal to employ what might conceivably have been considered a private convention.²

¹ This hand occurred in the recent World Championship Match in London.

² A private convention is any information conveyed during the bidding or play which is understood only by the players employing it, and of which the opponents are in ignorance. The mere publication of a convention does not remove it, in the author's opinion.

Another example of the lead-directing Double:

South—Dealer	♠ Q 9 8 3
Both sides	♥ K 9
vulnerable	♦ A K 10 6 4
	♣ K 9

♠ 7 5 2		North		♠ A 6
♥ Q J 10 4 2		West		♥ 8 7 3
♦ J 9 8 2				♦ Q 5 3
♣ 8		South		♣ J 10 7 6 4

♠ K J 10 4
♥ A 6 5
♦ 7
♣ A Q 5 3 2

<i>The Bidding:</i>	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
	1 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
	2 ♣	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
	3 N T	Pass	4 ♦	Pass
	4 N T	Pass	6 ♠	Double!
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

East's Double tells West that to lead his singleton club (which he would otherwise avoid because of South's club bid) will provide a setting ruff, owing to East's ♠ A (sure entry).

from the list of private conventions until it has gained fairly general usage or until it is a part of a widely used system (as the Culbertson System); otherwise full explanation should be made of its meaning before the game starts.

BOOK III

DISTRIBUTION AND HIGHER STRATEGY

The practical application of the principles explained in Book III is automatically embodied, so to speak, in the methods of partnership bidding, and especially in the Distributional Count already outlined. For all practical purposes of bidding, the reader, unless he is particularly interested in the more technical side of the intricate subject of Distribution, will not need to study this section.

CHAPTER XIX

DISTRIBUTIONAL VALUES

THE NEW concept of distribution underlies all modern bidding and, to some extent, it also underlies play. Originally the word 'distribution' referred only to the mathematical chances governing the division of suits in hands. As such it was, and still is, of slight practical value. Modern bidding is not based on abstract 'mathematical' averages, but on specific inferences exchanged between partners after each deal.

In its modern sense, developed since 1922 by the writer, distribution is the practical and scientific analysis of different types (patterns) of suit and hand distributions from the *standpoint of selection between bids* and of *best bidding methods*. As a result of far-reaching discoveries in distribution, modern four-card suit bids were introduced, the Approach principle was developed, radically new methods of Raises and Take-outs replaced the old-fashioned ways, and generally the games of Auction and Contract were revolutionized.¹

THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF CARDS

A pack of cards with its four suits is built up on two principles:

1. The principle of *rank* (quality), making each card of a suit either higher or lower than another card of the same suit. From this source are derived all the honour values: a card wins a trick simply because it is the highest of the suit led.

¹ The Law of Symmetry alone opened up a fascinating field in the world of cards. The scope of this book does not permit the analysis of this subject, which, although not of immediate practical importance, will doubtless exercise profound influence on all card games and on the modern theory of cards. The modern theory of distribution is, in most respects, such a decided innovation that it justifies the introduction of a few technical terms unfamiliar at present to some readers.

DISTRIBUTION AND HIGHER STRATEGY

2. The principle of *length* (quantity), making the thirteen cards of a suit break up around the table into smaller suits of various lengths. All low-card tricks arise from differences in length (mass).

This remarkable structure of cards is similar to the basic structure of an army with its 'leadership' and 'mass' factors and reflects the remote origin of cards in ancient games imitating war.

HONOUR-TRICKS AND DISTRIBUTIONAL VALUES

The value of most honour combinations is *positional* because the winning of tricks depends upon the position (favourable or unfavourable) of a higher missing honour or honours. The value of all low cards is *distributional*, because the available number of such tricks at any given bid varies largely according to the type of distribution (various lengths) in the suits and the hands.

All low-card values arise from two extremes of length:

- (a) Long-suit tricks are established and won, because the length of the suit permits the player to lead it after the suit has been exhausted from other hands.
- (b) Short-suit tricks become possible, because the very shortness of the suit permits the player to ruff the losers from his own hand in Dummy and, by making use of otherwise worthless trumps, gain an extra trick or tricks.

The distribution of the thirteen cards of a suit in the four hands is called *suit distribution*.

The distribution of the four suits in a hand of thirteen cards is called *hand distribution*.

Mathematically, the percentage of frequency of the one corresponds to the percentage of frequency of the other, but in practice there are two important distinctions:

- (a) Suit distribution determines the available supply of long-suit tricks.
- (b) Hand distribution determines the available supply of short-suit (ruffing) tricks.

Both are low-card values, dependent on distribution because derived from length, and are therefore called

distributional values. It will be seen how profoundly suit distribution affects the bidding when a player is selecting the best trump suit, and how the hand distribution often determines the final choice between no-trump and trump bids. Four-card or greater lengths are called long suits because, with favourable distribution, they can establish at least *one long card*, which is a potential trick.

Three or fewer cards of the same suit are called short suits or *remainders*. A four-card length becomes a remainder when a greater length of the same suit is outstanding in another hand. The following hand illustrates the *modus operandi* of the three different kinds of tricks:

♠ A K 9 6 3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> NorthEast </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; height: 100px;"> West South </div> </div>	♠ 7 5 4 2
♥ A 3 2		♥ 4
♦ A 10 9 7		♦ K 5 4 3
♣ 7		♣ A 8 6 2

With spades as trumps, and an even break in trumps and diamonds, the combined hands make 12 tricks as follows:

- 6 honour-tricks.
- 3 long-suit tricks in trumps
- 1 long-suit trick in diamonds
- 2 short-suit tricks in hearts.

Note that although more than 70 per cent of the available honour strength is present, honours by themselves account for only 6 out of the 12 tricks.

THE 39 PATTERNS OF DISTRIBUTION CLASSIFIED

There are 39 *types* or *patterns* of Suit and Hand Distributions. Some patterns, like 4-4-3-2, will occur in almost every deal; others, such as 10-1-1-1, are like the rarest of comets, and gravitate on the outermost bounds of Suit Constellations.

The usual classification of distributions into 'normal' and 'abnormal', on the basis either of suit lengths or their frequency of occurrence is misleading and meaningless. The 5-3-3-2 and 5-4-3-1 hand patterns, for instance, are both of

the so-called 'normal' class, the former occurring but slightly more often than the latter. Actually they belong to different races, and their practical effect on bidding is also quite different.

Assume spades are bid by Declarer when holding:

♠ A K 9 6 3 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ 5 2 ♣ 8 4

and the Dummy to be one of the following:

Pattern 5-3-3-2

♠ Q 10 7
♥ 10 8 2
♦ A 9 8 4 3
♣ A 9

Pattern 5-4-3-1

♠ Q 10 7 4
♥ 8
♦ A 9 8 4 3
♣ A 9 3

With *identical honour values* there is the great difference of 2 tricks between the Dummy of pattern 5-3-3-2 and of pattern 5-4-3-1. With 5-3-3-2, but 9 tricks can be made; with 5-4-3-1, 2 or 3 extra tricks are made.

From this viewpoint the graceful freak 7-4-1-1 is a blood relation to the normal 5-4-3-1, and the 6-4-2-1 pattern is its nearest kin. But there is no structural relation whatever between a 4-3-3-3 and a 5-4-3-1, although the frequency percentage of both is highly common. They differ as much as a white man from a black. In the bizarre world of cards they are simply of a different stock, and their distributional effect on the choice between trump and no-trump bids is accordingly different.

The modern classification of distributions divides them into *balanced* and *unbalanced* types. Hand (or suit) distributions are balanced (even) when containing no singleton; they are unbalanced (uneven) when containing a singleton or a void.

The 5-3-3-2, 4-3-3-3 and 6-3-2-2 patterns are balanced.

The 5-4-3-1, 4-4-4-1 and 6-4-2-1 patterns are unbalanced.

Freaks are *very unbalanced*; that is, they merely exaggerate the characteristics of 'normal' unbalanced types. As a rule, the unbalanced type not only contains a singleton but contains two long and two short suits, while the balanced type has but one four-card or longer suit. The balanced 4-4-3-2

and 5-4-2-2 patterns are notable exceptions, which incidentally explains why they are equally well fitted for no-trump and trump bids.

TYPES OF (HAND OR SUIT) DISTRIBUTION CLASSIFIED

BAL- ANCED PAT- TERNS	PER- CENTAGE OF FRE- QUENCY ROUGHLY	UN- BALANCED PAT- TERNS	PER- CENTAGE OF FRE- QUENCY ROUGHLY	VERY UN- BALANCED PAT- TERNS	PER- CENTAGE OF FRE- QUENCY ROUGHLY
4-4-3-2	22	4-4-4-1	3	7-3-2-1	1.80
4-3-3-3	11	5-4-3-1	13	6-4-3-0	1.30
5-3-3-2	16			5-4-4-0	1.20
5-4-2-2	11	5-5-2-1	3	5-5-3-0	0.90
6-3-2-2	6	6-4-2-1	5	6-5-1-1	0.70
		6-3-3-1	3	6-5-2-0	0.60
				7-2-2-2	0.50
Total	66	Total	27	Total	7.00

Note.—The mathematical computations of frequency assume a perfect shuffle, which in practice is rarely possible. After the selective play of 52 cards—selective because each player is forced, when able, to follow suit—a certain *inner pattern* is formed. This artificial pattern is only partially destroyed by the usual shuffle. The powerful factor π (that is to say, the imperfect shuffle) rudely upsets the gravitational balance of blind numbers, and is the reason why unusual patterns occur in actual experience considerably more often than is theoretically indicated by their percentage of frequency. The Law of Symmetry is often of great value in determining the actual rather than the theoretical hand and suit distributions.

THE REMAINDERS

The thirteen cards of a suit break up into a four-card or longer suit and its *remainders*. Four-card or greater lengths are called *long suits*. With even distributions, a long suit can eliminate the outstanding cards of the same suit and establish one or more *long* cards which are potential tricks. Three or fewer cards of the suit are short suits or remainders,

because it is impossible to develop a *long* card. Even four-card suits are often remainders of a longer suit.

The two- and three-card remainders are called balanced.

Example:

With ♠ 5-3-3-2 the three remainders are balanced.

The one- and four-card remainders are called unbalanced.

Example:

With ♠ 5-4-3-1 the four and one are unbalanced remainders.

With freak distributions of the same suit, such as ♠ 7-5-1-0 the second long suit is an 'abnormal remainder' of the first.

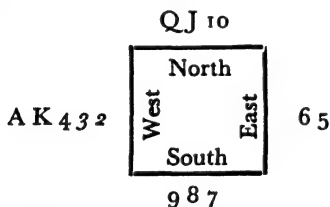
Hand distributions 5 and 4, 6 and 4, 7 and 4, are semi-two-suiters.

Hand distributions 5 and 5, 5 and 6, etc., are two-suiters.

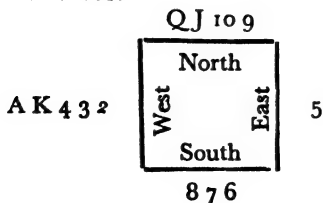
SUIT DISTRIBUTIONS AND LONG SUITS

In any long suit the number of establishable low cards is governed by the distribution of its remainders in partner's and opponents' hands.

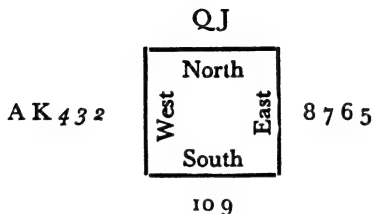
Examples:



With distribution 5-3-2-3, the long suit makes in all 4 tricks, of which 2 tricks are made with honours, and 2 other tricks with low cards.



The same long suit, with remainders distributed 4-1-3, makes in all 3 tricks, of which but 1 is a low-card trick.



The same long suit can now make 5 tricks (distribution of remainders 2-4-2), and 3 out of 5 tricks are made with low cards.

The total value of the same suit, containing identical honour-tricks, varies tremendously according to the distribution of its remainders. The Law of Averages, which is the mainstay of routine theorists, is of little help in valuing any long suit. When holding a five-card suit, the distribution 3-3-2 of remainders is only slightly more probable than 4-3-1. Yet the difference in the actual value of the suit is 100 per cent or more.

It is the business of partnership methods to ascertain whenever possible in each individual instance the precise distribution of a long suit, rather than to rely on so-called averages. Abstract 'mathematical averages' are of slight help in determining precisely the distributional values available at various bids, so that the player who bases his Bridge on so-called averages is as hopelessly handicapped as a doctor who bases his diagnosis on statistics of frequency. The underlying motive in most of the modern methods of bidding is to convey information, not only as to honours held, but as to the specific suit and hand distributions of each deal. Without precise knowledge of distributional patterns, the selection of the best-fitting bid, especially in trumps, is pure guesswork. The help of mathematics should be invoked only when no other information is available, which will not happen often if bidding methods are sound.

HONOURS AND LONG CARDS

Honours are valuable stoppers and re-entries, but low cards in long suits have their own independent trick-taking power, which is derived from length and is governed by distribution. The presence of honours merely increases the total trick value of the suit.

Example:

	A K	
The trump suit	North	
7 6 5 4 3 2	West	East
will develop 4 tricks	South	10 9 8
	Q J	

	Q J	
	7 6	
The trump suit	North	
A K 5 4 3 2	West	East
now develops 6 tricks	South	10 9 8
—the same 4 low-		
card tricks plus 2		
honour-tricks		

It follows that the total trick-taking value of a long suit is derived from two distinct sources—honour (rank) values and low-card (length) values. The honour values depend upon the strength of individual honours and the position of the higher missing honour (or honours); the latter depend upon the length of the suit and the distribution of its remainders.

This fundamental fact explains why there are two sets or groups of Bidding Methods, as follows:

1. Bidding Methods to show mainly honour strength in suits and hands.
2. Bidding Methods (Supporting, Denial and Take-out bids) to show mainly lengths or suit distributions.¹

¹ The principles of rank and length in the fundamental structure of cards also govern and methods used in defensive play. The

These two underlying objects are usually blended in one bid; the player has but two or three opportunities to speak before the bidding reaches the final or game stage. In order, therefore, not to crowd the bidding too rapidly he must be strictly economical in the use of his bids and thus must start the bidding low, as a rule, and try to pack into a single bid as much information as possible about honours and lengths. This is the principle of *economy of bids* which is the basis of Approach and Forcing bids.

Scientific bidding, far from being based on so-called mathematical averages, is really a constant attempt to replace the temporary, wooden framework of averages with the steel and cement of precise inferences, exchanged during the bidding, as to honour and distributional values. The real meaning of modern ideas of distribution is found here.

It is also evident how futile the systems are which base the bidding almost entirely on the assertion that Bridge 'is a game of Aces and Kings'. Both sides will usually hold their share of honours, and then the issue is invariably decided by 'reserve battalions' of low cards in long and short (ruffing) suits. The team which uses the best bidding methods to mobilize and marshal these distributional reserves must win.

HAND DISTRIBUTION AND SHORT-SUIT (RUFFING) TRICKS

The number of ruffing-tricks available in support of partner's trump bid depends mainly on two conditions:

- (a) the length of the trump suit, and
- (b) the shortness of the suit—is it a doubleton, a singleton or an absent suit?

A singleton with three trumps is worth about as much as a doubleton with four trumps;¹ on the other hand a singleton

conventions of leads fall into two groups: *quality-showing* leads, such as leads from the top of honour sequences; *number-showing* leads—which really mean distribution—such as fourth best, 'top of nothing', etc. Signals and echoes also show, sometimes, short and long suits, i.e. distribution.

¹ Short suits do not, as a rule, increase in value with five or more trumps in the Dummy, because it is not safe to assume that

with four trumps is worth twice as much as a singleton with but three trumps.

To put it another way, *the type of hand distribution—trump and short-suit lengths—determines the number of available ruffing-tricks in the Responding Hand.* This is a very important factor to consider when making a final decision between no-trump and trump bids and, in general, when valuing trump bids.

Example:

Distribution 4-3-3-3 is worthless from the standpoint of short-suit (ruffing) tricks, and a hand such as

♠ K J 5 ♥ J 10 6 4 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ K 8 4

is much better played at no-trump, even though partner has bid spades.

A distribution such as 4-4-4-1, assuming that one of the four-card lengths is partner's trump, is very rich in support of his trump bid, first because of a singleton, and second because of two long side suits. This type of distribution will bring in from 2 to 4 *extra* tricks not available at no-trump. It follows, therefore, that it is cheaper to play this hand for five odd at diamonds, than for three odd at no-trump.

In choosing between no-trump and trump bids, on the one hand there is the fact that but 9 tricks are required to score game at no-trump; against it, on the other hand, is the fact that short-suit (ruffing) tricks are not available at no-trump and are frequently available at trump bids.

Even good players commit the fatal error of considering principally the fact that no-trump is mathematically cheaper than a major, and a major cheaper than a minor. They should consider first the distribution, and the 'cheapness' of no-trump only secondarily.

As a general rule, when both partners hold balanced patterns such as 5-3-3-2 or 4-3-3-3, these patterns, being deficient in distributional values, will fit in best with no-trump, since but 9 tricks are needed for game; unbalanced patterns such as 5-4-3-1 or 4-4-4-1 will best fit in with trump bids, partner will hold more than three cards of the suit of which the Dummy has two or one; or, if he is holding more than three cards, that he will have more than two losers.

because the ruffing values due to singletons, together with side-suit lengths under trump protection, will more than counterbalance the numerical disadvantage of playing the hands at trump bids for 10 or 11 tricks, instead of for 9 tricks at no-trump.

Distribution is the lever that regulates the rhythm of bidding. Just how this powerful lever works out in practice will not be clearly understood unless the essential differences between no-trump and trump types of play are realized.

CHAPTER XX

THE STRUCTURE OF NO-TRUMP AND TRUMP BIDS

THE STRUCTURE OF NO-TRUMP BIDS

THE DIFFERENCES between no-trump and trump bids are in some respects so characteristic that it would be correct to define Contract as consisting of two distinct games.

The gist of the no-trump game is this: under the protection of commanding honours, which serve as *stoppers* and temporarily block the enemy's suits, partners strive to establish and cash in as tricks the low-card reserves of their combined longest suits. At the same time, honour-tricks are being developed by finesses or, when in sequence, by direct leads.

The opponents are doing likewise. This seesaw process goes forward under the constant pressure of *time*, for the side wins which is first to break through with a sufficient number of established low cards. Potentially there are many more tricks than the first 13 to survive. Time in Bridge consists of thirteen leads, and each lead is equivalent to a move, or the right to play *first*. Each lead is therefore a time factor, and *stoppers* or *re-entries* serve to gain precious time, much as do fortresses in war.

THE STRUCTURE OF TRUMP BIDS

The play of hands at trump bids differs from the play at no-trump in two essentials, as follows:

First: Low trumps are additional stoppers and re-entries. Under trump protection, it is easier to establish low-card tricks in side suits than at no-trump, because of lack of sufficient stoppers (time) at no-trump. The trump suit becomes a central fortress which bars the way to third and often second leads of the enemy's long suits. The only way the opponents

can break through is by attacking and undermining the trump suit. Hence, the technique of *forces* during the play.

Even when all four suits are stopped by honours, there is frequently a distinct advantage in playing the hands at a trump bid in preference to no-trump. A single stopper in a suit may easily be insufficient. And yet there are many other hands which will play at no-trump to distinct advantage.

The type of hand distribution is the deciding factor when choosing between the final no-trump or trump bid.

Unbalanced patterns, such as 5-4-3-1 or 6-4-2-1, contain *two* long suits. The second suit will develop a low-card trick more often under the protection of trumps than at no-trump. Consequently these patterns are better suited for trump bids.

Balanced patterns, such as 5-3-3-2, 4-3-3-3 or 6-3-2-2, are 'one-suiters' as they contain no second four-card or longer suit. With these patterns the scope of trump plays is limited, and most of the advantages inherent to trump plays are lost. Consequently the tendency is toward no-trump for 9 tricks, always assuming stoppers are available.

To illustrate:

Assume with the two hands below that clubs are stopped by partner:

1. ♠ A K 8 5 4 ♥ K 10 9 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ 7 2
2. ♠ A K 8 5 4 ♥ K 10 9 8 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ 2

Both hands are identical in honours, but in the second hand one low heart is added and a club taken away, giving a 5-4-3-1 pattern. It is evident that the second hand is worth more if played at spades than the first. It has a second long suit in hearts, and, further, a low card in hearts has a better chance to be established under the protection of the spade trump than at no-trump.

It is also evident that in this example the enhanced value of the 5-4-3-1 pattern does not arise from a singleton club—singletons are of value in the Responding but not in the Opening Hand—but from the presence of the second length. The common belief that 'a singleton in Declarer's hand is not an asset but a liability' is a fallacy. Hands with singletons contain, as a rule, two suits, and hands with two suits

are intrinsically more valuable, provided the trump suit is sound.

Second: The second and even more important distinction between no-trump and trump plays lies in the fact that *in trump plays short suits can be utilized to produce extra ruffing-tricks not available at no-trump*. No-trump victories are won with only two kinds of tricks—honours and long suits; trump plays, in addition, make use of a third kind of tricks—ruffing-tricks. The requirement of 9 tricks for game at no-trump, as against the 10 or 11 for game in suit bids, is mainly an awkward attempt to counterbalance the excess of ruffing-tricks available at trump bids.¹

The following hands

DECLARER	DUMMY
♠ A K 10 6 3	♠ Q J 9 8
♥ 6	♥ A 9 5 3
♦ A 7 5 4	♦ 8
♣ A 6 3	♣ 8 7 5 2

will produce 8 tricks at no-trump, but at spades the same 8 tricks are available *plus* 3 ruffs of losing diamonds in the Dummy, or 11 tricks in all.

For trump bids the importance of unbalanced distributions is even greater in the Responding Hand than in the Opening Hand, where short suits have no extra trick value.

In deciding upon a no-trump contract, one must first be assured that there are no suit bids available which will carry with them the extra bonus of ruffing-tricks, and thus nullify the scoring 'cheapness' of no-trump.

Unbalanced distributions are 'trump distributions', because extra tricks are available which justify playing at the higher game contract. Balanced distributions are 'no-trump distributions', because no extra tricks inherent in trump play

¹ The scoring distinction between no-trump and trump bids is logically derived from their different structure. The distinction made between major and minor suit bids is unreasonable, purely arbitrary and inconsistent with the structure of bids. The writer long ago expressed the wish and hope that some day all suits will be equalized in scoring.

are available, and therefore the contract of 9 tricks for game at no-trump is cheaper.

Balanced distributions are also best fitted to the situation when a Penalty Double is in question, and worst fitted for the making of Slam bids. Slam bids on balanced distributions, especially the 5-3-3-2 pattern, must be reinforced with extraordinary honour strength to be at all successful.

THE NO-TRUMP COMPLEX

The reader must be warned that this analysis, however important, deals with *tendencies* rather than hard and fast rules. There are too many exceptions depending on 'local conditions', and the wooden application of these principles may conceivably do harm. In the question of choosing between game at a minor suit or no-trump, one must be especially careful to ascertain that at least 2 extra tricks are available if the hand is played at a minor suit. Nevertheless, the fact remains that even good players suffer from the 'no-trump complex', and give too much weight to the scoring value of bids, and not enough to their distributional aspect. Most players start and end with no-trump, regardless of distributions. Cheapness recommends itself, and they blindly strive to gain a trick in the bid of a no-trump, at the price of losing 2 or more tricks by failing to fit distributions to a favourable trump bid.

Shortly after the writer developed the new principles of distribution, he was surprised to see a very serious fallacy advocated by many leading writers who evidently understood these principles only superficially. According to the Approach principle, if a choice is available between any biddable suit and no-trump, the suit should be bid *first*, even if it is a four-card minor, *no matter what the distribution*. Other writers, believing this fundamental principle to be too radical for the 'masses', decided to improve it by laying down the following precepts: with a singleton do not bid no-trump; with an unprotected doubleton the choice between suit and no-trump is optional (whatever that means); and with an unprotected three-card suit prefer no-trump.

As a matter of fact, the decided preference given in the Approach-Forcing System to original suit bids has nothing to do with the fear that an unprotected suit will not be stopped. If this is true, a no-trump is much safer with a singleton than with an 'unprotected three-card suit', because, mathematically, the chances that partner will stop the suit are greatly increased. The object of the Approach principle is to explore the distributions around the table and to avoid, whenever possible, shutting out valuable four-card suit bids with an original no-trump.

Furthermore, the fact that the Opening Hand is distributed 4-3-3-3 (no-trump distribution) does not necessarily mean that partner's hand will not be unbalanced, and therefore still play better at a trump bid than at no-trump. Only when both partners' hands are balanced is no-trump to be preferred—and that can be determined only during the subsequent bidding.

To illustrate:

With the following type of hand open with one spade:

♠ A Q 7 5 ♥ K 5 4 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ Q J 2

If partner holds:

♠ K J 4 3 ♥ A 8 7 2 ♦ 8 ♣ A 10 9 3

the game is certain in spades, even if the club finesse loses, and at no-trump but two odd will be made with five diamonds and the ♣ K on the left of the ♣ A.

In conclusion, the first step in bidding is to ascertain partner's type of distribution and balance of honour strength. This means 'approaching' with low suit bids. The second step is to ascertain the solidity of the trump suit or, if no-trump is the projected bid, to discover possible stoppers. The third step is to weigh the balanced against the unbalanced patterns and prefer no-trump as a final bid only when it is clear that there are no suit bids available which carry with them the extra bonus of long-suit and ruffing-tricks. These distributional values are greater or less, according to whether the distributional patterns of the hands are unbalanced or balanced. Their principles can be expressed in three short sentences, as follows:

THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF DISTRIBUTION

I. THE VALUE OF UNBALANCED PATTERNS

When the distribution of the Opening Hand is unbalanced, the hand is worth at least 1 trick more at a favourable trump bid than at no-trump.

When the distribution of the Responding Hand is unbalanced, the hand is worth from 1 to 4 tricks more at a favourable trump bid than at no-trump.

The same principle applies to very unbalanced distributions (freaks), or to situations in which the combined hands are unbalanced, only in a more accentuated manner.

At times it is possible to infer from the bidding whether partner's distribution is balanced or unbalanced.

If the distribution of one hand is balanced, but the distribution of the other hand is unbalanced, the combined hands will still play to better advantage (from 1 to 2 tricks better) at a favourable trump bid.

The assertion that 'a two-suiter (5-5-2-1) is worth from 1 to 3 tricks more when played at a suit bid than at no-trump' is an isolated instance of the general principle applicable to all unbalanced distributions.

A no-trump bid should be attempted only after all major suit possibilities are eliminated, and when honour strength does not justify game expectancy in a minor. It must be remembered, however, that an ideal no-trump hand is a fairly solid minor with an outside Ace, and just enough Queens and Knaves to control or 'stop' opponents' suits.

No-trump 'rescue' bids of two or higher, when it is evident that the combined hands are a misfit, are suicidal.

An unbalanced distribution will easily affect the defensive strength of honours around the table, and one must take this into consideration when doubling for penalties.

2. THE VALUE OF BALANCED PATTERNS

When the distribution of the Opening Hand or the Responding Hand is balanced, the hand will usually produce about 1 trick more (though sometimes no tricks more) at a favourable trump bid than at no-trump.

Example:

DECLARER	DUMMY
♠ A K Q 6 3	♠ J 8 5 4
♥ A 9 2	♥ K 7 3
♦ K Q	♦ 9 4 2
♣ 8 4 3	♣ A - - 6

The combined hands will make 9 tricks in spades and also 9 tricks in no-trump in spite of great honour strength fairly well distributed.

With balanced hands 'nine is cheaper than ten', and no-trump will prove to be the best final bid, always provided that reasonably sure stoppers are held or inferred.

Patterns 5-4-2-2 and 4-4-3-2 are exceptions to the rule since they play equally well at no-trump or suit bids. They contain two long suits and doubletons, which together will average roughly from 1 to 2 tricks more at a suit bid. However, they are quite open to inroads by all suits in the first two leads.

A hand with a balanced pattern requires reinforced honour strength to score a game and especially a Slam. Such a hand is best utilized for Penalty Doubles against opponents' bids. One should also be particularly careful not to push too energetically defensive overbidding on balanced distributions.

THE STORY OF INDIVIDUAL HAND PATTERNS

Each pattern possesses interesting individual characteristics which distinguish it from other patterns of the balanced or unbalanced type. Most of these characteristics refer, however, to the Law of Symmetry. As stated in the note on page 289, it is not within the scope of this book to discuss another fascinating aspect of distribution, the Law of Symmetry, which is a practical method of gauging the suit and hand distributions of the remaining hands from the type and contents of the player's own hand before and during the bidding. One important fact must be mentioned, however. When the distribution of the hand is unbalanced, the distribution of the remainders of at least one long suit is very apt to be unbalanced also. In addition, a second unbalanced

hand and suit are generally outstanding. With unbalanced hands it is dangerous to expect too confidently the 'average' breaks in suits. With very unbalanced distributions the 'unaverage expectancy' becomes the rule. Exactly the same principle applies to the balanced type, in which the general expectancy is for evenness and the average around the table.

The 4-4-3-2 Pattern

The 4-4-3-2 pattern is the most common and most stable of all patterns. In support of partner's trump bid, it offers four trumps (usually), a second four-card length in which a low-card trick can be developed behind a trump suit, and the possibility of a ruff through the doubleton. Nevertheless, it is well adapted to no-trump as well.

Many players have difficulties in playing four-card suit bids. The playing combines no-trump and trump technique. Generally one *starts* as though the hands are being played at no-trump, avoiding the lead of trumps; one *finishes* in a typical trump-play manner by taking out trumps, but only after the necessary ruffs are made and the long suits are established.

The four-card suit family really came into its own in 1922, after the writer had disproved the then current fallacy that four trumps were too few to withstand being 'forced', and that therefore the minimum of five trumps was required, as a rule, for suit bids. With but four trumps, the chances of finding four trumps in the Dummy are largely increased, and the strength of four-card bids lies in the ability to take forces (ruffs) in either hand, and yet have enough trumps left to establish low cards in side suits and to draw the adverse trumps.

New requirements have been established and, as a result of four-card suit bids on A Q 3 2, A J 10 2 or K Q 10 2, the range of game-going and game-saving bids has been practically doubled. Many players, however, who use these four-card suit bids, make the grave error of supporting them on the three low trumps or Q 2 originally established for five-card minimum lengths.

The 5-4-2-2 Pattern

The 5-4-2-2 pattern has, in accentuated form, the same characteristics as the 4-4-3-2. The 5-4-2-2 is a bizarre pattern—a mongrel. With its five- and four-card lengths it does not really belong to the balanced type; and yet, with its two cumbersome doubletons, it is wholly out of place in the temperamental family of 5-4-3-1 or 6-4-2-1. In support of partner's trump bids, the 5-4-2-2 has certain virtues of the unbalanced type, with all the defects of the balanced.

The 5-3-3-2 Pattern

The 5-3-3-2 pattern is next to the 4-4-3-2 in frequency and the most placidly prosaic of all. With all flanks exposed to the enemy's honours, and but an embryonic ruff, its cheapness recommends it for no-trump, of which it is the mainstay, together with the 4-3-3-3.

The 6-3-2-2 Pattern

The 6-3-2-2 pattern is merely an improved edition of the 5-3-3-2.

The 4-3-3-3 Pattern (The Hypocrite)

The 4-3-3-3 pattern was extolled for generations as an almost 'ideal type' of distribution, but it is actually the most sterile, arid and worthless of all hand patterns—a black sheep in the family of balanced hands. Its only redeeming feature is that it is relatively scarce (it has an 11 per cent frequency), and occurs about half as often as its substantial brother, the 4-4-3-2. In support of partner's trump bids the 4-3-3-3 offers not the slightest possibility of ruffs. With its solitary four-card length, it is equally deficient for no-trump plays, which also need lengths to succeed. The only reason it is used most often for no-trump bids is that it is not wanted in trump bids.

The 4-3-3-3 requires a considerable excess of honours to counterbalance its wretched deficiency in distributional values and, paradoxical as it may seem, it is much worse luck to receive a 4-3-3-3 hand distribution than not to have enough Aces and Kings. When both hands are distributed 4-3-3-3, a game at any bid, no-trump or trump, is almost impossible except with overwhelming honour strength. A

strong hand with the 4-3-3-3 hand pattern can best be used for Penalty Doubles, and even here, as will be seen, particular care must be exercised not to fall into a distributional trap.

The placid poise of the 4-3-3-3 hand pattern is dangerously deceiving. Frequently it is the centre of violent distributional storms and the symptom of unexpected freaks in the remaining hands.

The 5-4-3-1 Pattern

The 5-4-3-1 pattern is the most popular and representative member of the unbalanced family. The richness and tremendous increase in low-card values in all the patterns of the unbalanced type are apparent here at once. Compare the fertility of 5-4-3-1 to its barren brother 5-3-3-2, or to the emptiness of the 4-3-3-3. The 5-4-3-1 hand pattern will occur almost as often as the 5-3-3-2, and yet, when played in support of partner's trump bids, the former type of hand with identical honour strength will produce from 1 to 3 low-card tricks more than the latter. Such is the power of singletons, voids and second lengths.

The 6-4-2-1 and 4-4-4-1 Patterns

The 6-4-2-1 hand pattern is even richer in distributional values than the 5-4-3-1, while the relatively scarce 4-4-4-1 is a variant of the same family, perhaps with a touch of monstrosity—a barometric needle presaging distributional ‘storm areas’ in one or more remaining hands and suits.

Freaks

The very unbalanced hand distributions, with their voids, freak lengths and five- and six-card abnormal remainders of other five- or six-card suits, are simply more accentuated forms of the unbalanced type. They play marvellously at a favourable trump bid, and are wrecked on the invisible rocks of distribution if the trump suit is poorly selected.

The most valuable features of unbalanced hand patterns are wasted when played at no-trump. The short suit values vanish, and low cards in long suits are frequently stifled for lack of stoppers.

WAR TACTICS IN OPEN AND MOUNTAINOUS
COUNTRY

There is a striking similarity between the open and mountainous ground which determines war tactics, and the balanced and unbalanced hand distributions which so profoundly affect the tactics of no-trump and trump bids. Balanced distributions such as 5-3-3-2 or 4-3-3-3 are exposed on all flanks to the attack of enemy suits, and the battle is reduced mainly to the brutal bullying of Aces and Kings. It is a fight in the open, level country.

The unbalanced distributions such as 6-4-2-1 and 5-4-4-0 are 'mountainous territory', with narrow gorges and closed passages in the combined hands, in which Kings and Queens are often ineffective and through which at times even Aces cannot pass. The fight centres around a trump fortress, and the issue is decided by the correct choice of a trump suit and the distributional reserves available. The bidding strategy will consist of a series of manœuvres in order to select the best bidding position or bid, and that position will be the one which best fits in with the distributional background of partnership hands.

The substance of higher strategy in bidding is this: whenever feasible, start low with *minimum biddable trump suits* and throw out a network of inferences to determine the distribution and honour strength of partnership and opponents' suits and hands. (This is simply the use of Approach and Forcing principles.) Raise, deny, take out or rebid the suits. Then select the bid to fit your cards. In Golf one drives first and then putts. In Bridge there are no drives except Pre-emptive bids, but only a series of Approach shots and putts.

In this manner scientific Contract ceases to be a crude affair of 'quick-tricks' but reaches much more deeply into the real structure of cards. It acquires a strategical character in which the factor of 'mass organization' (distributional values) is on a par with the factor of 'leadership' (honours).

CHAPTER XXI

SOME ASPECTS OF HIGHER STRATEGY

TO CONCLUDE the discussion of Distribution and Higher Strategy in Contract bidding, a few definite and readily analysed aspects of higher strategy may well be considered.

SIGN-OFFS

A Sign-off bid is a bid made by some player during the contracting which his partner should interpret as a request for him to pass. In general, it consists of a Rebid in a suit previously mentioned, and for this reason it requires nice discrimination to avoid confusing it with strength-showing rebids.

The manner in which a player can best determine whether his partner is showing additional strength or merely directing the bidding into the safest channel is to realize the alternative bids at partner's command. If partner seems to have made a bid which can serve no useful purpose toward reaching a game, this bid should be construed as a Sign-off.

In general, if a player bids the same suit three times and his last bid is still short of game, the inference which should be drawn is that the player does not wish to reach game. This is even more true of minor than of major suits. Consider the following bidding:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♦	1 N T
2 ♦	2 N T
3 ♦	?

North is now in a position to reason as follows:

He has made a negative bid in the first place, but has shown by his second bid that his hand is not an absolute minimum. The contracting has reached two no-trump, and it should be fairly clear that if the Opening bidder thinks that there is any chance for game he will bid three no-trump, three in a major suit or four diamonds. A three diamond bid

can serve no useful purpose—it merely throws the burden of the next bid back on partner. Therefore the only purpose in making it must be to show partner that the hand should play at three diamonds *and at no other declaration*. It should show further that the diamond suit is not absolutely solid, or, if it is, that the hand contains no outside trick. The message is, in short—since the Responding Hand is not strong enough to bid two no-trump over one diamond—that game is almost impossible. North is not absolutely barred from bidding three no-trump, but he should proceed with caution.

All this may seem very confusing and paradoxical, but the fact remains that it should be very easy to distinguish between when partner is optimistically trying to reach a game contract, and when he is evidently somewhat in fear of a penalty if game is reached.

A Sign-off is recognized most easily if it occurs after a no-trump bid by partner. It is frequently made in a minor suit; even if this suit is bid only for the second time it should be construed as a discouraging bid because of its lack of constructiveness. For example:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♥	2 ♣
2 NT	3 ♣

South should now consider well the possible meaning of the three club bid. His two no-trump bid has guaranteed some sort of fit in the club suit in addition to a fairly strong hand. Can North feel that he is helping the bidding along to any extent by attempting to show that his club suit is rebiddable? In fact, would it be possible for North to hold a rebiddable club suit which would not guarantee at least 5 tricks in support of no-trump? With such a hand would North not bid three no-trump immediately, dispensing with what would be a formality? If North's hand was so strong that he felt that five clubs would be a better contract or that six clubs was possible, he would then have available the perfectly sound bid of *four* clubs. All this reasoning should pass through South's mind, and he should reach the conclusion that this cannot be the purpose of the three club bid. Its

only other purpose, then, must be to try and prevent him from bidding any further because of the hopeless nature of the hand for game. The suit, therefore, cannot be rebiddable and must, in fact, be extremely weak. This also applies to the hand, and its very weakness as a whole must imply that the hand can contain no game. Since South could not bid three no-trump over two clubs, it is almost impossible for him to hold sufficient strength to go to three no-trump over three clubs.

It is quite possible for a player to give two Sign-off bids during the course of a hand. In general, the first of these Sign-offs is the negative response of one no-trump; the second is usually a choice between the two suits which partner has bid. In some instances this second bid is still made in the same range, and in others it carries the bidding higher; but in both situations it is a strong request for partner to pass. In no sense of the word is even the second of these Sign-offs as obligatory as the one previously mentioned, but they should be construed definitely as danger signals. For example:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♠	1 N T
2 ♥	2 ♠

North's hand probably consists of something like:

♠ J 9 2 ♥ 8 6 3 ♦ Q 5 3 ♣ K J 8 4

Obviously if South's hand was not strong enough for a Forcing Rebid, there is hardly any holding which he could have which would make a game for the above hand. And consider the following:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♣	1 N T
2 ♥	3 ♣

North's hand is probably the following, or very close to it:

♠ Q 5 4 ♥ 8 6 2 ♦ K 9 7 ♣ Q 4 3 2

Here the Sign-off inference carries the bidding higher, but it is nevertheless present. In this situation, however, South's

hand may be strong enough to warrant further bidding, as his bidding has been considerably stronger than in the preceding example. The fact that he has reversed the bidding of his two suits shows automatically that he is not afraid that the hand may get too high. In fact, with the above hand, if South's next bid should be three no-trump, North should not be too much afraid of the outcome and, as a matter of fact, should optimistically expect to fulfil the contract.

FITS AND MISFITS

When the bidding has disclosed that the partnership hands are likely to come to an unfavourable result, owing to a failure to find 'fits' for the suits held by the Opening and Responding Hands, there is a general impression that the contract should immediately be carried to no-trump to show inability to support partner's suit. This is a dangerous fallacy. No-trump bids should in many cases provide some support for the suit bid by partner. It is, of course, apparent that game in no-trump cannot be made, even with great honour strength, unless the two hands have some suit which is establishable. Certainly, a suit held by one player, which is too weak to rebid and for which partner holds no support, cannot properly be classified as an establishable suit. When the first round of bidding has disclosed that the hands lack favourable distribution, it is often much better to rebid a shaded rebiddable suit, or to shade the biddable requirements of some other suit, than to plunge immediately into a no-trump contract on a hand which is obviously a misfit from the start.

Consider the following holding:

♠ A J 9 8 7 ♥ K Q 2 ♦ A 10 9 8 ♣ 3

This hand certainly justifies an Opening bid of one spade, and, if partner responds with two clubs, another declaration should be found. Many players would at once bid two no-trump, and partner, holding something like:

♠ 6 ♥ J 8 4 ♦ Q J 5 2 ♣ K Q 10 5 2

would carry the contract to three no-trump, and the hand

would inevitably be defeated 1 or 2 tricks, since neither spades nor clubs are establishable, and, at best, the diamond suit produces only 4 tricks. In this instance, a much better bid than two no-trump is two diamonds. The Responding Hand is still able to bid no-trump if he can visualize a fit, which he can easily see if his spade holding is as good as Q 2. On the hand above, he should, of course, realize that, if the Opening Hand cannot support clubs, and he cannot support spades, all plans of playing the hand at no-trump should be abandoned, unless partner's honour strength is so great that he is able to dispense with the necessity of establishing one or both of these suits. Thus, on the second round of bidding, the correct response to two diamonds is three diamonds. In this situation, the Opening Hand, having refused to bid two no-trump over two clubs, should equally refuse to bid three no-trump over three diamonds, as he has greatly shaded the strength in his second suit, and his correct course is now to pass.

This illustration discloses the danger of no-trump bids, when holding a low singleton in a suit bid by partner, unless the hand is quite strong. Quite often hands are held in which the honour strength certainly requires a Rebid, but in which there is no second suit that could conceivably be offered as an alternative. It is then wiser to rebid the Opening suit, even though it may lack Rebid strength. Suits like A J 9 6 4 and A 9 8 5 3 properly come within this category. Partner should be able to interpret hands bid in this way as being partially in the nature of Sign-offs and should, of course, use discretion in making further bids. This situation should not be confused with Rebids after a no-trump response, or with free Rebids after partner has passed.

When these rules are observed, it happens that many hands, lacking strictly biddable values, may be bid again because of the knowledge that partner holds some strength in the suit chosen for a Take-out. Holding six diamonds to the Ace-Queen, and no other honour strength in the hand, with the following bidding:

Opening Hand

1 ♠
2 N T

Responding Hand

2 ♦

three no-trump may be bid with safety, since it is apparent that the Opening Hand holds at least the diamond Knave with one or two others, and very possibly the King. For the player who does not follow these principles, it would be necessary to bid three diamonds, since the suit might quite probably be worthless at no-trump. This would then require the Opening Hand to guess whether the bid of three diamonds was designed to end the bidding or to disclose additional strength.

To continue, if you hold:

♠ A J 10 2 ♥ 9 3 ♦ 10 6 4 2 ♣ Q 8 7

and the bidding has gone as follows:

Opening Hand

1 ♣
2 ♣

Responding Hand

1 ♠

you can safely bid three no-trump in spite of the fact that the hand actually contains no Rebid values, for the sufficient reason that the hand does contain the club Queen—a card definitely marked as valuable, since it may very easily assure the winning of 5 tricks in the club suit.

Underlying these principles of bidding comes one of the important principles of play, of which bidding is a mental counterpart. This is the Time Factor. If it requires a number of time units (leads) to establish a suit, the adversaries quite probably will establish their suit first. On the other hand, if a suit is established before play starts, it is quite conceivable that the opponents will not have sufficient time units (leads) to establish their long-suit tricks. Possibly they may establish long-suit tricks, but, before there is an opportunity to use them, their hands will be crippled by the necessity of discarding on Declarer's long suit, which is led immediately.

An appreciation of fits and misfits is almost as essential in determining the correct final contract at a suit as at no-

trump. On frequent occasions, the holding of an honour in partner's suit determines the question of whether or not to make a Rebid. Consider the following hands:

1. ♠ K 9 8 7 6 ♥ 4 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ Q J 9 3
2. ♠ K 10 4 3 2 ♥ 7 5 2 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ K 6

With either of these hands, you respond with one spade to partner's one club bid, and partner, in turn, raises the contract to three spades. The slightest study reveals that neither hand contains actual Rebid values. There is, however, an added value not apparent in any mathematical counting of the hands, and that is, in both hands, the definite fit of the club holding with partner's Opening bid, and the consequent knowledge that this suit in the Dummy may provide a place for discarding losers in the closed hand. This applies with especial force to the second example, as, in Hand No. 1, the club suit is of such length that it suggests the possibility that partner may not hold more than four cards in the suit. Even here, however, the hand has a greater value than its apparent count. The possible losers are minimized because of the definite knowledge that at most 1 trick will be lost in the long side suit.

THE STRATEGY OF OVERCALLING OR PASSING

When one side has opened the bidding, whether the Opening bid is one no-trump or one in a suit, the adversaries are, for the time being, on the defensive. Whether you yourself are attacking or whether your object is to remain on the defensive, will be determined by the subsequent bidding. The question of whether you should make a simple Overcall or a Take-out Double, or take even stronger action, when holding a hand of considerable strength, cannot always be determined by hard and fast rules. An expert player once remarked to a weak partner who had shown a strong inclination to bid on every occasion:

'Remember that you are not required to bid every time it comes round to you.'

If the Opening bid has been a suit bid of one, the course

of the Defending Hand, who is next to declare, is determined to a great extent by the strength he holds. Of course, with a 'bust' hand, only a pass can be suggested. However, the Defending Hand will frequently hold from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 or more honour-tricks. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is quite often the sounder strategy to overcall immediately with a hand containing $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, and to pass with a hand containing $4\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks. A pass with a hand of this type is, of course, a strategic pass, as for the moment it denies holding even half the strength which the hand actually contains.

When the bidding has been opened by an adversary, it is generally easy to determine whether the defending player may expect that he will have to defend against a game contract or not, and some idea of the possibilities of game for the Defending side may be gleaned from the general make-up and honour-trick strength of the hand. If the hand offers possibilities of premiums rather than penalties, the next issue to be determined is the best method of attack. If the hand contains a maximum of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, but a long spade suit headed by such cards as Queen-Knave-Ten, it will appear that, if the Opening bid is a heart and the Responding Hand is able to raise, game in hearts is quite possible to the attacking side. On a hand of this type, particularly when not vulnerable, the best course is immediate counter-attack—namely, an Overcall of one spade. This bid has for its first object an interruption of the enemy's lines of communication, and, as its second purpose, the disclosure to partner of possible lines of defence, as it is quite possible that a sacrifice overbid of four spades may be the most profitable course to pursue.

Assume again that the Opening Hand, vulnerable, has bid one heart. The Defending Hand (second to bid) has a strong holding of balanced distribution, containing 4 honour-tricks or more, and probably a trick in the heart suit. This hand promises the best reward if its holder makes a strategic pass. To overcall immediately will naturally prevent the Responding Hand from making a response on a shaded holding. To pass probably permits the development

of a much more satisfactory situation. If the Responding Hand makes any bid, it is quite likely that the contract may reach a point where a lucrative penalty may be obtained. If the Opening bid of one heart is passed by all the players, it is still probable that you will collect a penalty of 100 to 300 points, which is at least the equivalent of any part-score available for your side. On the other hand, should your partner have some strength, even enough to make game, the undoubled penalty available against vulnerable opponents would probably be not less than 450 points and might be even 700 points, which is more than the value of a non-vulnerable game.

On other occasions, a player may hold a hand containing from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 honour-tricks over an Opening bid. On a hand of this type, with balanced distribution, unless your partner can either bid or double for a Take-out, there is little prospect of a trick-score for your side. Your principal hope with such holdings is that your opponents may reach a game contract which cannot be made. It is, of course, obvious that an immediate counter-attack, under these circumstances, will tend to handicap rather than aid the opponents in reaching a game contract. Again, a strategic pass may well be the best policy.

The discussion thus far has dealt with hands of balanced distribution. With hands of the unbalanced type, whether or not your opponents are vulnerable, but if you are not vulnerable, it is wise to bid immediately, particularly when you hold a reasonably good suit of your own. Whether you make a simple Overcall, a Jump Overcall, a Take-out Double or an Immediate Overcall in the opponents' bid suit, depends upon the distribution of your hand, as well as on its honour strength. When you hold a long suit of your own your hand is naturally not as effective in defence as in attack.

Holding a strong hand with a fairly good suit of your own, the Take-out Double is a strong strategic weapon. This is especially true of hands which also contain defensive values, although, strategically, the Take-out Double may be based upon a strong established suit.

While attack is the best defence, a word of caution must be given against weak Overcalls, even when not vulnerable. Generally speaking, a simple Overcall indicates a minimum of $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks and a trump suit of fair to good strength, depending upon whether you must overcall at the range of one or two.

Among the more expert Contract players, the largest penalties are generally collected on contracts of less than game. It is generally true that when a strong pair reach a game or Slam contract, they have, through the exchange of information, correctly assessed the strength and weakness of their combined holdings and are probably not in the wrong suit. Nor have they greatly overestimated the trick-taking power of their hands, as a rule. To make an Overcall in the face of declared strength, without knowing anything about the hand of your partner, or of your adversary who is yet to speak, is more or less a leap in the dark. If the chosen trump suit is extremely weak, an Overcall, even at the range of one or two, may quite easily be penalized from 3 to 5 tricks.

A player should learn to recognize at a glance the type of hand on which it is best to overcall, so that, even with weak honour strength, a possible last line of defence through taking a penalty sacrifice may be disclosed to his partner; the type of hand on which it is wisest to pass strategically in the hope that the opponents will unaided carry the bidding too high; and, finally, the type of hand which offers probable defence against an adverse game, but practical certainty of playing for a penalty loss, provided the holder enters the bidding.

The most eloquent of all declarations is the pass. Probably a good rule to adopt—particularly when you have a good partner—is simply this:

‘When in doubt, pass.’

These principles are not meant to suggest a negative policy. On many holdings, however, a pass may be a more effectual weapon in securing the best result on the hand, than any bid in the category of Contract. It is wise to dis-

criminate when considering an Overcall. To be able to determine when to assume the role of passive defence, of aggressive defence or of strategic defence (waiting for the opponents to reach the breaking point), is one of the marks of a good Contract player.

BOOK IV
BRIDGE PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER XXII

WHAT PRICE PSYCHOLOGY IN BRIDGE?

TECHNIQUE WITHOUT Bridge psychology is of little value. A player may know everything about Bridge technique, but if he is lacking in Bridge psychology or knowledge of the *personal equation* he cannot succeed. In the precision and depth of inferences required, Bridge is quite as scientific as Chess and, in addition, leaves a large field for the personal equation. As in war, it is indispensable to conceal as much as possible one's strength and weakness from the enemy.

Bridge psychology deals with partnership adaptation and surprise tactics against the opponents. In war it is exactly analogous to the factors of morale and surprise. In Bridge, bidding co-ordination without morale, and strategy without surprise, *are unthinkable*. And any system of Contract that does not take into account a detailed analysis of methods underlying the personal equation loses a great deal of its force, however excellent otherwise. A player may know everything about 'quick-tricks', 'counts' and 'winning methods', and yet be as helpless as a child, or as a general whose strategy ignores the imponderable factors of human nature.

It is precisely here that the vital distinction between a 'book' and a 'versatile' player lies. The versatile player knows the honour and distributional factors *plus* the factor of Bridge psychology. Although he probably learned his psychology in a more or less rudimentary and subconscious manner, in the rough and tumble of the everyday game, his superiority is so great that such a player, even though possessing at times less experience and less technical knowledge than the book player, may outclass the latter hopelessly. This fact, and not luck, explains why a player who makes 'ignorant mistakes' in play and slips up in bidding

may win against a so-called expert 'who never drops a trick'.

Even more important than the strategy of surprise is partnership adaptation. Partner's mental processes are profoundly affected by his emotional reactions and the degree of his intelligence; his attention will be killed if an inferiority complex is provoked; and even if his intelligence is superior, and his skill is but average, he will be hopelessly befuddled by unnecessary refinements and startling deductions. The effects of bad morale are at once visible in red on the score. Adaptability is a basic law of the survival of the fittest in Bridge. No player, however perfect in technique, can claim to be an expert, or indeed even a winning player, unless he learns how to play bad partners as well as he can play bad cards. Players who bemoan bad partners are certainly less justified than those who bemoan bad cards. Partners (and opponents) can be controlled and guided to a large extent by superior skill in psychology.

Good players and writers have always realized the vital need of Bridge psychology,¹ but it is generally believed that the 'knack' of psychology, like the mythical 'card sense', is a mysterious, inborn faculty and cannot be taught or 'acquired'. This is far from being proved. The main reason why Bridge psychology has only been dealt with occasionally lies in the extreme difficulty of reducing the subject to precise formulas. As a matter of fact, Bridge psychology, like distribution, can be scientifically reduced to practical principles. The following pages present certain clearly defined principles and classifications, together with a num-

¹ It is a remarkable fact that out of several hundred textbooks on Bridge the writer found, until 1930 (the date of publication of the first *Contract Bridge Blue Book*), only one which gave at least a few pages to Bridge psychology. This one reference to psychology is in *McC Campbell on Auction Tactics*, published in 1915 by one of the greatest practical players. Since 1930 several writers have begun to stress the factor of psychology, unfortunately in much too vague a manner to be of practical value. A book, however complete otherwise, which teaches nothing but generalities in Bridge psychology *cannot contain* living, usable knowledge.

ber of specific bidding situations, to replace the vague and practically meaningless generalities heretofore current on this fascinating subject of card psychology, in the hope that other Bridge minds will better this work.

Most of the 'psychic' or surprise bids outlined herein were not originated by the writer, but form a stock of practices common to great players in America and abroad. No inherited talent is necessary to understand and acquire Bridge psychology, as the careful reading of these chapters will prove. Bridge psychology operates in two ways, which are discussed under the following chapter headings:

1. Partnership psychology.
2. Surprise tactics against opponents.

CHAPTER XXIII

PARTNERSHIP PSYCHOLOGY

IN ESTIMATING the real meaning of any bid or play made by partner, or the actual effects of bids conveyed to him, the composite picture of three psychological factors must always be kept in the background. They are as follows:

1. Partner's degree of technical knowledge.
2. Partner's level of natural intelligence.
3. Partner's temperament and morale.

All bids and plays will be largely influenced by these three factors, and each factor in turn plays a greater or lesser role according to the individual player. Therefore, in preparing to make a bid or a play, one must keep partner's possible mental reactions in mind, and in trying to determine the precise meaning of partner's bids or plays one must again readjust the scale of bids on the basis of his character, skill and brains.

A bid or a play is a stimulus, but partner's reactions will not be predicated as much on the cold intrinsic value of the hand or of a bidding situation as on these three human factors; or, in other words, it is not so much what partner *should* do as what, considering his mental make-up, he actually *does*, or is capable of doing, that really counts. There are thousands of bids and responses that Partner A simply could not make, which Partner B is impelled to make. The reason is that temperament, skill and intelligence vary. Just as well-known burglars and thieves are frequently identified by their peculiarities, subconscious habits and style of technique, a Bridge partner can be catalogued and his reactions to bids foreseen on the basis of his personality.

The ideal yardstick based on technical perfection must thus be modified according to the individual.

It is often said that the true measure of a good player is

in his ability to play bad hands. But it requires a far greater skill and knowledge to play well with bad partners than to play bad hands.

FACTOR ONE—PARTNER'S SYSTEM

A system is an orderly body of organized knowledge. Without some sort of system it is impossible even to cross a street and not risk mortal danger, let alone play a complex game like Contract.

Every player except the veriest beginner has a system of Bridge. His system may be quite subconscious, or he may belong to the proud class of *wunderkinder* who 'never read a book' or who 'have no system'. The fact remains that all players have a system—a certain stock of theories, habits and practical methods. Those who 'never read a book' acquire their best knowledge from other players who have read a good book or two, and also from their very limited individual experience; those who are loudest in disclaiming any system usually have a system, and often quite a dogmatic one—without being aware of the fact—tucked behind their bids and plays.

The very fact of not having a system is suspiciously systematic. Some excellent players proclaim that they have no system, but this is simply a natural and proper reaction to the popularity of several systems which are inferior to and in conflict with a good player's own experience. He therefore prefers to announce that he plays no system, rather than be measured for a loss by a bad system—which is wise psychological conduct. It may also be vanity which causes a fine player to convey the pleasantly mysterious impression that from his profound self he has elaborated a system all his own. Bad players also have a system which is largely made up of a few wrong theories gleaned from bad books, and a superficial generalization of individual experience.

The outline of partner's system becomes apparent after careful study of as few as a dozen hands bid and played by him. Therefore the first principle is to study the hands bid and played by partner (and opponents), to form an idea of

his (or their) *theories*. His theories and ideas on fundamentals will largely control his practical methods in bidding and play, as they will eventually control his actions in life. The essential theories are but few in number and easily traced.

Since the heaviest losses arise from ill-selected trump suits, the first thing to verify is: What are his trump habits?

Is he in the habit of raising Opening suit bids of one on three small or even two trumps? If he does give weak trump Raises, very probably he learned his Bridge and became 'fixed' about fifteen years ago, when trump suits of less strength than A K 4 3 2 were barred, and low four-card suit bids for game were considered madness.

In such cases the proper procedure is as follows:

(a) Assume that partner's Opening trump bids are stronger than your biddable minimums. You will therefore lower slightly your own stringent requirements for trump support.

(b) The advantage of four-card suit bids is so tremendous, that to renounce bidding them simply because partner is apt to raise with weak support would be disadvantageous. A much better plan is simply to ask him not to raise your bids unless he holds three trumps headed by a Queen, or four small ones. In so doing one must keep in mind, however, the power of habit and constantly use special precaution during the bidding to feel out the trump situation.

With a weak partner, a player should abstain from bidding hands with four-card minimum suits or weak two-suiters.

For instance, with

♠ A Q 3 2 ♥ A 6 5 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ 7 5 3

he should, pass: although with

♠ A Q 10 8 ♥ A 6 5 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ Q 7 5

he should bid one spade. As stated, the advantage of four-card suit bids is too great to be given up.

An Overcall of an adverse one heart bid, when not vulnerable, on a hand like

♠ K 9 7 6 4 ♥ 6 ♦ A 10 4 2 ♣ Q 7 5

though safe with a partner who will make a sound Raise,

is dangerous with a player who will raise on light holdings, especially when vulnerable.

In general, the proper plan is *not to give up one's own bidding methods*, but to modify them and, during the bidding, use extra precautions in order to be sure of proper trump distribution.

Avoid, as a rule, making any bid unless prepared for a weak Raise by partner.

This principle is particularly valuable when one is vulnerable, or opponents have a part-score. The nervous tension is apt to be high, and, even with a partner who is not very likely to raise lightly, it is best not to venture a bid unless some leeway is allowed should partner take a possible gamble.

The second important thing to ascertain about partner is: *Does he use 'negative' one no-trump responses to show as few as 1½ honour-tricks if he is unable to support my Opening trump bids?* If partner holds to the old-fashioned theory that even a one no-trump response means fair strength, or to an even worse theory that a one no-trump response means 'nothing', Declarer's Rebids should accordingly be made on lower or higher values depending on partner's theory.

In no event, however, should Declarer modify his Approach methods of bidding, no matter what the partner's ideas are. Especially with a weak partner it is essential to open the bidding low and, whenever possible, with a suit. The bidding is not crowded too rapidly and is much easier for partner to follow. It is better to lose occasional games than to encourage partner to bid on close hands, for it is a fact that practically all average or weak players are unduly encouraged by no-trump bids. The use of Approach methods, and the extra care taken to assure proper trump support, will in themselves eliminate most of the losses when playing with unskilful partners.

All players, good or bad, have certain idiosyncrasies or fixed Bridge habits, so that their bidding and playing methods, and even their errors, are apt to run in grooves which careful study will quickly reveal.

For instance, some players are afflicted with 'quick trigger' Penalty Doubles on mere honour-tricks, and without giving due consideration to distribution. Their Doubles must be guarded against by taking them out more freely.

There are many others who will not open the bidding unless holding at least 3 honour-tricks; still others will open on but 2 honour-tricks. This makes a great difference in estimating the minimum trick expectancy.

Certain players will overcall an adverse Opening suit bid with a hand such as

♠ A Q 8 4 2 ♥ 6 5 4 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ 8 5

Others will not overcall with a hand such as

♠ A K 8 4 2 ♥ 6 5 4 ♦ A 9 7 3 ♣ 8

On a hand such as

♠ A K Q J 9 4 2 ♥ 8 7 2 ♦ 6 ♣ 4 3

an Opening four spade bid is excellent with Partner A, but idiotic with Partner B, whose theory is that a four-bid shows great strength and that he, therefore, feels justified in carrying the bidding to a Slam upon the slightest provocation.

Considering that players usually move in the same Bridge set, it is relatively easy to catalogue the theories and idiosyncrasies of one's partners. Even if one is confronted with strangers, a rapid observation will soon furnish an insight into their few underlying theories. Most players cannot *visualize their own hands in combination with partner's*. They may hold two Aces and a King after a two-bid, and still shake in their boots, not realizing that a Slam is in sight; others with a hand containing four blank Aces run amuck while partner, who has already passed numerous times, is helpless to prevent the inevitable blow. *Plastic Valuation*, therefore, must be modified to include, when possible, partner's inability to visualize two hands as one.

The question is not how well or how badly they play. That matters little. The real question is: What are the specific theories or habits from which their bids and plays will spring?

FACTOR TWO—INTELLIGENCE

It is very difficult to distinguish between factors of skill and intelligence. Bad bidding may be due either to lack of skill or to inferior intelligence. For all practical purposes of partnership adaptation, both factors should be treated alike. What applies to one, also applies, with few changes, to the other.

Almost every player before bidding asks himself: 'Is my bid technically correct?'

This question should always be supplemented by another question:

'Is my partner skilful enough to understand the particular kind of bid that I am about to make?'

To make a subtle bid which is misunderstood by partner is like bombarding sparrows with a cannon. The measure of success of any bid lies in the degree of understanding it conveys to partner, and the master player is he whose bidding inferences are so simple that even an average player can see a few jumps ahead—and thus be relied upon to act accordingly.

With a first-class player as partner, a great deal more should be told about one's hand; the inferences can be far-reaching and subtle, and, the better the partner, the more involved and complicated the reasoning process can become. Partner can and must read the inferences correctly, because his ability to make logical assumptions, or his inferential capacity, are considerably richer than those of a weak player. In fact, there is even a danger in being too obvious.

THE TECHNIQUE OF SIMPLIFICATION

Simplification of bidding inferences is the key to success with weaker partners. The bidding information should be conveyed in a simple 'popular' language of inferences without regard to finer points or deeper implications. This does not mean, however, that partner's intelligence should be underestimated; it merely means that his limited skill should not be taxed too much with over-refinements of bidding. Start-

ling bids should be especially avoided, as partner may easily become panicky. He should not be put in a difficult situation where his lack of skill may force him to guess wildly, and every precaution should be taken to *eliminate any guessing on his part*.

For instance, the following bidding is correct with a good partner:

(Dealer)		(Strong Partner)	
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 N T	Double	Pass	Pass
Redouble			

Here South, after East's Penalty Pass, makes an S O S Redouble, which demands that partner bid his longest suit. An S O S Redouble with an unskilful partner may prove disastrous. He should know what to do, but he may not know or *may not remember*.

Again:

(Dealer)		(Average Player)	
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 N T	Double	Redouble	Pass

Now, technically speaking, East's pass after North's Redouble indicates his belief that he holds sufficient strength to defeat the Double of one no-trump. West, however, should not leave in such a Redouble. This interpretation is altogether too difficult to grasp and too technical even for a fair player.

Suppose South holds

♠ A Q 7 5 ♥ 4 2 ♦ A K J 10 8 6 ♣ 3

and the bidding is as follows:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
2 ♦	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♥
3 ♠			

Three spades is a very beautiful and logical bid—with a good player. South having bid his diamonds twice, the inference is clear that his spade bid, uttered in the nick of time, so to speak, shows but a four-card suit and absolutely

demands that partner revert to diamonds unless he holds three spades to a King, or four small spades. Such a bid, however, might prove altogether too difficult for an unskilled partner.

Take another source of misunderstanding: South, who is a weak player, opens with one spade. His partner holds:

♠ K Q J 5 4 ♥ A K 9 6 4 ♦ A 3 ♣ 6

Declarer may hold two Aces, and still the Grand Slam is highly improbable if he also has three low hearts. The proper bid is to make a Forcing Take-out of three hearts, and follow with four no-trump (see Slam Bids). A keen partner will then see, by the process of elimination, that the Grand Slam is reasonably certain *if* he holds two Aces and the ♥ Q or not more than two hearts. This complicated plan is extremely dangerous with a weak partner. A direct six spade bid is safer. Assuming that he knows enough not to pass a Forcing bid, he may easily become confused between spades, no-trump and hearts and, believing *on his theory* that his spade suit is too weak, decide to improve with a seven heart bid on something like ♥ 4 3 2—the very thing that you wish to avoid. With only one bid mentioned, the margin of possible errors is reduced.

Certain bids are safe with an average partner, and dangerous with an expert. To illustrate:

♠ A K 10 9 8 6 ♥ A K Q J 2 ♦ 5 4 ♣ —

An Opening two spade bid would be dangerous with a keen partner. He expects 5 honour-tricks in *three* suits, and, by applying precisely the processes of elimination, may easily carry the hand to a losing Small or even a losing Grand Slam. With a partner whose process of elimination is not very precise, an Opening two spade bid should be made, especially if he is a little conservative on Take-outs of one-bids.

The reader must be warned that simplification does not mean acting toward one's partner as though he were a moron. Underestimating partner's intelligence or skill is the most common and costly error of Bridge psychology.

Very few essential inferences will be missed by the overwhelming majority of players, provided they are allowed to develop their thinking naturally and in peace. Great technical knowledge and experience may be lacking, but the creative intelligence is there to group harmoniously the ideas conveyed—if they are clear.

A PROBLEM IN PSYCHOLOGY

The following hand graphically illustrates the mental reaction—to the same bidding situation—of players of different skill, except beginners.

No score. East and West vulnerable
North and South not vulnerable

♠ K 8 2				♠ A 4
♥ J 5				♥ A K Q 8 7
♦ A 3				♦ 6
♣ K J 9 8 6 5				♣ A Q 10 4 3

The Bidding:	WEST (Dealer)	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♣	2 ♠	3 ♠	Pass
	3 N T (or 4 ♣)	Pass	?	

The first question is: What will players of different skill bid in East's place?

1. *The majority of bids will range from 4 hearts to 5 hearts.*

The important inference will be missed that any bid lower than a direct Slam bid by East, who holds an overwhelming hand, will, very probably, be passed by West.

2. *A minority will bid directly six clubs.*

3. *Experts will bid seven clubs—the chances greatly favour West's holding ♦ A.*

4. *Master players will bid four no-trump.* They will take this free opportunity to determine definitely that West has not got ♦ K Q instead of ♦ A. To this Forcing bid West of course responds five no-trumps, having one ace and the king of the *only suit* bid by the partnership. Now East safely bids seven clubs at his next opportunity.

The second question is much more difficult.

Assume that the bidding continued as follows:

(Dealer)	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♣	2 ♠	3 ♠	Pass
	3 N T	Pass	4 N T	Pass
	5 N T	Pass	7 ♣	Pass
	Pass	7 ♦	?	

What will players of different skill bid in East's position?

1. *Most players will double.*

The following calculation will probably escape them: A Grand Slam and game vulnerable are worth roughly 3000 points. If East doubles North's seven diamond bid, he is reasonably certain to defeat the contract by 5 tricks which, not vulnerable, is worth 1000 points (4 trick and 6 trick penalties are equally remote). The player has to choose, therefore, between the practically certain 1000 points and the highly probable 3000 points. The popular fallacy expressed in the proverb, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush', may sway most players in the wrong direction.

2. *Higher ranking players will bid seven hearts.*

They successfully leap the mathematical hurdles, but fall down on a more difficult inference with respect to the submerged rocks of distribution. West has not two five-card suits, and therefore holds at the most four hearts, and very likely but three or two. North very likely holds at least twelve cards in spades and diamonds, and therefore one heart at the most. Since East has but five hearts, there is a grave danger that at least four and possibly five hearts are in South's hand. A Grand Slam bid in hearts is thus unsound.

3. *Experts will bid seven no-trump.* It seems highly probable that West will have enough intermediate strength to fill the heart suit, or to make up 13 tricks at no-trump some other way.

4. *Master players will pass.* The pass here is used as a *Forcing bid*—a beautiful inference. East has, by himself, carried the bidding to seven clubs, an impossible bid without overwhelming honour strength and length in hearts. The bidding has definitely established that East and West hold all four Aces and solid clubs. West can therefore assume, from East's

failure to double, the following: 'Partner, I still prefer that we try for a Grand Slam. You know that I have a strong heart suit; if your hand contains some slight heart strength to ensure its being an established suit, with the probability of an extra trick here or there in your hand, bid seven no-trump. If not, the Double is to be preferred. I purposely left the door open by my pass.' Having a six-card club suit and the ♠ K (a sure trick, in place of the ♦ Q East might have assumed) West bids seven no-trump.

If East really doubts that a Grand Slam can be made, his proper bid is to Double.

5. *A handful of super-experts* (they number ten or fifteen in the world) *will discriminate*.

They will pass with an expert partner.

They will bid seven no-trump with a partner of average skill. Really he should not be expected to read a pass as a Forcing bid—and might pass in turn.

FACTOR THREE—PARTNER'S TEMPERAMENT AND MORALE

A precise curve can be drawn on a chart of the bidding rhythm—slow or fast—of any player. This rhythm will largely depend upon his natural temperament or character. Some players are naturally expansive, optimistic or aggressive; other are over-cautious, conservative or timid. The practical method to follow with these two types is to meet them on their own level:

1. Be aggressive (but not too aggressive) with the aggressive partner.

2. Be conservative (but not too conservative) with the conservative partner.

This procedure is psychologically quite sound, although it is exactly opposite to the usual practice and appears paradoxical. In being aggressive or conservative, it is not your opinion of partner but his opinion of you which counts. If partner rates you as an aggressive type and is himself conservative, he will then become even more conservative, and the more aggressive you become to make up for his ultra-

conservatism the more will he shrink until there is an even wider gulf between you.

Similarly, if your partner, who happens to be an aggressive type, rates you as conservative, you are equally at a disadvantage, for he will now become even more aggressive, and the more you are conservative the more he will be aggressive until there is another gulf. The only way to make the two blades of the scissors meet is to have your aggressive partner form an opinion that you also are aggressive, which will make him less aggressive; and to have your conservative partner form an opinion that you also are conservative, which will make him less conservative.

This is a very important point in partnership adaptation. A truly great player is one about whom half of his partners swear that he is conservative, while the other half maintain that he is aggressive. He himself, however, is neither intrinsically aggressive nor intrinsically conservative, but is bold or cautious according to the bidding situations and partner's psychology.

With a conservative partner, one should avoid bedrock minimum bids because partner is temperamentally unable to visualize them, and his Raises, therefore, are apt to be light. With an aggressive type, the bidding should be light and spirited, but never carried to the extreme limits of the hand. Also, dangerously high bids, which offer no escape if you are trapped, should be absolutely avoided.

MORALE

Partner's morale or emotional state is as important for allies at the Bridge table as for an army in battle, and a player who can maintain a high morale with his partner under adversity, and, more important still, under the intoxication of approaching victory, certainly possesses a tremendous asset. This question of morale is automatically solved for those who realize that partnership is simply a sporting proposition; we are drawn together for better or worse and, therefore, like true pals, should stand by each other cheerfully and courageously.

In the matter of morale, one fundamental fact must always be kept in mind: Every human being floats, so to speak, in an invisible sea of mental complexes—be they of inferiority or superiority. An inferiority complex is like a delicate wound that never heals completely, and, at the Bridge table, it is especially apt to be irritated, first because other social beings are present, and second because Bridge is frequently not only a struggle of wits for pride alone, but for stakes as well.

An unusual flux of emotions, especially humiliation or anger or fear, is bound to handicap profoundly the drawing of inferences and the execution of reason. It is essential, therefore, that partner's inferiority complex be appeased as much as possible, so providing a satisfactory way of excusing his errors and losses.

This does not mean that partner should be unnecessarily flattered. Russians say very appropriately, 'Praise the goat, and next time she will refuse her milk.' It is certainly true that there are types of partners who can be brought out of their depressing fits only through a sharp word.

The practical attitude toward all partners should be that of a philosophical, sincere and sympathetic friend. Partner must never be allowed to feel that his loss is taken too hard by you. During bidding and play, partner, however weak, must feel that you sincerely respect his intelligence and efforts. Unless he is the veriest beginner, his bids must not be taken away on the silly ground that he would lose tricks in the play. He might easily lose a trick in play, but the difference between bad play and the best bid covers more than 1 trick or even 2. He should be complimented if successful, and, if he makes a blunder, extenuating circumstances should be provided for him as an escape. Again, he must never feel that you take his loss too much to heart, and the only way to avoid making him feel that you do, is not to take any loss too tragically.

Partnership morale will always be maintained at a very high level if the following rule is obeyed to the letter: 'Never reproach your partner if there be the slightest thing

for which you can reproach yourself'. Most disasters can be avoided by a good player if he takes care to foresee partner's possible mistakes.

When partner makes an error, his mind is often too pre-occupied to dwell carefully on the new hand dealt, and a second and a third mistake of an even more serious nature are apt to follow unless some precautionary measures are taken at once. The best plan is to be deliberately slow for a while, and to cheer your partner up until he completely recovers. The same plan should be followed to take the sting out of a large penalty.

Recriminations, *even though one is quite right*, are like pouring water on flaming oil, and serious mistakes almost inevitably follow.

The part-score and the rubber game have a particular fascination for many minds. Even ultra-conservative players are apt to come out of their hiding places when goaded by cupidity. Therefore, in bidding to the part-score or in the rubber game, a player should not venture a bid without some leeway in the event of partner deciding to make an unjustifiable Raise or venture a 'gamble' that offers no escape if he is trapped.

These are some of the points connected with the factors of skill, intelligence and temperament which a keen observer carefully absorbs. They all have an important bearing on any contemplated bid or play. The outline of partnership relations above is sufficient, however, for its purpose—that of specific practical application.

CHAPTER XXIV

SURPRISE TACTICS AGAINST OPPONENTS

THE MECHANISM OF SURPRISE BIDS IN CONTRACT

WELLINGTON SAID, if I remember correctly, 'The art of war is knowing what the other fellow is doing over the hill without letting him know what is being done on your side of the hill.'

As in war, surprise is an essential factor in psychological tactics against opponents. The bid (or sometimes the absence of a bid), which misinforms the enemy and leads him to make a wrong assumption, is a *surprise* bid. Under this general heading there are grouped many different kinds of surprise bids variously known as 'bluff', 'camouflage', or 'psychic' bids. In this connection it is important to clear up two points which are apt to cause confusion—one dealing with the ethics of surprise bids, and the other dealing with a certain kind of idiotic bluff bids.

Surprise tactics are perfectly ethical, and are sanctioned among the best players, *provided no private understanding of any kind exists between partners*. It is the basis of the Card Constitution that anyone has a right to bid and play his hand as he sees fit: it is the basis of Card Ethics that a private understanding between partners, *even though it be tacit*, is a gross violation of the code of sportmanship, amounting to cheating. With this stringent proviso, surprise bids are a legitimate and interesting part of Contract tactics. They are eminently fair because, in attempting to misinform the opponents, the same and sometimes even a greater chance is taken of misleading one's partner.

The writer has always objected to the so-called fake bids, indulged in by premature Bridge psychologists, which consist of bidding a suit of which the player holds but a singleton, in the hope of confusing the opponents. This objection,

however, is voiced not on the grounds of ethics but on the grounds of stupidity. For instance, a fake bid of one spade with a hand such as

♠ — ♥ A K 7 6 4 3 ♦ A 9 8 2 ♣ K 5 4

is perfectly ethical but also feeble-minded. It can only fool the partner.

Such bids do not form part of the surprise bids analysed in this chapter.

The art of the unexpected in Contract revolves around this point: Make the enemy accept a wrong set of facts instead of the right set of facts. Furnish him with wrong premises and then allow him to draw perfectly logical conclusions. The result, if successful, will be surprise, confusion, consternation. This baiting of the opponents with wrong premises is possible because the opponents are naturally 'listening in' on the line of communications between partners.

As a rule, it is more important to convey information to partner even at the price of informing the opponents as well. There are certain bidding situations, however, in which it becomes more advantageous to mislead opponents, even at the price of also misleading partner. Such situations give an opening for a surprise attack in the bidding, similar to false carding, bluff leads and the like in the play. Take, for instance, the following typical surprise situation:

A pass by Dealer conveys, as a rule, an inference to the opponents that his hand is below average. If Dealer, after the previous pass, proceeds to bid up high, the superficially inclined opponents will conclude that, inasmuch as he passed before, he is weak and is flag-flying. They therefore double him, and discover to their surprise a masked battery in the form of a hand such as

They might easily go game at their own bid, and instead they take an insignificant penalty, or at times even lose a doubled contract. Their mistake is in leaning too heavily upon the premises of the pass. They jump to the conclusion without that mental reservation which characterizes all scientific thinking.

Surprise bids are loaded with dynamite, not only for the opponents, but for the bidder himself. They must be perfectly timed and carefully executed, for nothing is more disastrous than a secret attack discovered beforehand by the enemy. 'Counter surprises' will follow, and the player will be hoist with his own petard—a fate which befalls most of the users of surprise tactics, who, impatient to pull off something smart and startling, forget that a bidding situation may not arise for months in which a certain kind of surprise bid can be effectively used.

The tactical structure of surprise bids rests upon three essential requirements, as follows:

1. The possibility that partner—who is also misled—may interfere must always be carefully weighed. The advantage of surprising the opponents must outweigh the disadvantage of misleading partner. Only bidding situations should be chosen for 'psychic' bids in which partner's possible interference can do no harm, or in which subsequent bidding will give him a clear cue.

2. The player must, as a rule, have in reserve an 'escape bid' of sufficient strength to carry the bidding high without risking a severe penalty. This 'escape bid', which usually consists of a long and fairly powerful suit, offers a safe retreat not only against opponents but against partner's possible interference. Without elements of real strength in the hand, any surprise bid is a bomb charged with sawdust.

3. In passing for a swing, or in making an aggressive bid in one suit in order to conceal strength elsewhere, the player must be reasonably certain that the bidding will be kept open either by the opponents or by his partner.

I. PROVIDING AGAINST PARTNER'S INTERFERENCE

To illustrate:

North and South not vulnerable

East and West vulnerable

(Dealer)

SOUTH

Pass

WEST

1 ♥

NORTH

1 N T

North's no-trump is an inhibitory no-trump. North holds:

♠ 5 4 ♥ 6 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ A K Q 8 6 3 2

North's hand is not very hopeful after partner's pass. His one no-trump is an inhibitory bid. North attempts to induce the opponents to believe that a single or a double stopper in hearts is held. If opponents can be made to assume that a game in hearts is not certain, they may allow North, after one or two rounds of bidding, to play the hand at, say, four clubs. If one no-trump is doubled by opponents, there is the 'escape' club suit. If the hand is played at one no-trump not doubled, even a loss of 5 tricks not vulnerable becomes a gain against opponents' probable game contract.

If partner raises no-trump or bids spades, North can bid clubs; and if partner raises again, *North's club suit is strong enough to rebid again*—a clear warning to partner by this time.

Note that the situation for this bid is carefully timed: (a) Partner has already passed, and (b) North and South are not vulnerable. More important still, the strength of the club suit is such that partner's repeated interference is amply provided for. The club suit is an 'out', and strong enough to be bid high without risk of severe penalty, which is the second requirement mentioned above for successful surprise tactics. This bid will not work against keenly alert opponents. If strong they will double one no-trump, and sooner or later smoke out the real suit. Against *them*, the proper surprise tactics would be to *bid in such a way that they will expect a 'psychic' when you actually have a strong hand*. Finally, against a *very keen opponent*, who will expect you to reverse your tactics, you should surprise him again by reverting to your original 'psychic' bids.

2. GOOD (NOT STRONG) HANDS THAT MAY BE PASSED ORIGINALLY

If Dealer holds a type of hand which contains a long, practically solid suit, or a freakish two-suiter, and has only 2 honour-tricks, he can pass it without fear that the deal will be passed out.

A pass with a hand such as

♠ 3 ♥ — ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ A K J 9 8 6 4 3 2

is perfectly safe. Very rarely will the thirty-nine remaining cards be so divided in the other three hands that (in spite of a singleton or a void in clubs in at least one of the three hands, and correspondingly increased lengths in other suits with Aces, Kings, Queens and Knives) some player will not have a sound bid.

The psychological advantage of re-entering the bidding after a previous pass is obvious, and, in fact, hands of this type are bid half of the time *pre-emptively* with Opening four- or five-bids and half of the time *psychologically*—first with a pass, and then with mounting rounds of bidding.

Paradoxical as it may sound, if the Dealer ever holds thirteen clubs, his best and safest bid may easily be a pass. As stated above, it is almost out of the question that not one of the three remaining players should open the bidding. The Dealer's re-entry into the bidding is bound to be interpreted by opponents as defensive overbidding and, as the bidding will be very spirited, he will probably glide into his seven club bid naturally and be doubled; if, however, he opens the bidding with seven clubs, it is conceivable that opponents will take the bid away by a defensive seven-bid at a higher ranking suit. Of course, there is always the danger that if the opponent, having read this book, also passes 'for a swing' with another long suit, the hands will be thrown in.

This extreme example is used only to illustrate the principle to follow, when deciding between a bid or a pass for a swing.

As a rule, no matter what the distribution, hands containing 3 honour-tricks or more are decidedly not safe to pass originally, for there is grave danger that the deal will be passed out.

To illustrate:

♠ A J 2 ♥ A K 7 5 ♦ Q J 10 3 ♣ 5 4

To pass such a hand originally simply to fool the opponents

is most naive. Usually, the remaining players, not having enough honour strength to bid, will also pass, and partner will never visualize such strength. Besides, there is no point in passing such hands of great defensive strength.

Such a hand as:

♠ K Q J 8 5 4 3 ♥ K Q J 9 8 ♦ K ♣ —

is on the border line between a reasonably safe pass and a bid.

Concealing distributional strength by a previous pass can be compared in war tactics to a feint retreat in order to create an impression of weakness. *A la guerre comme à la guerre*. A bluff one no-trump Overcall, without a stopper in the opponents' bid suit, is comparable to a feint attack, the object of which is to give a wrong impression of strength and to distract attention from the actual strength held elsewhere. In fencing, a feint thrust is a similar psychological diverting of attention. In diplomacy the same manoeuvre is employed, if we are to believe Talleyrand's witticism that 'Language was invented to conceal one's real thoughts'. This author's preferred strategy can be summarized in his favourite saying: 'The best way to fool people is to tell them the strict truth.'

CHAPTER XXV

A BAG OF TRICK BIDS

(Surprise Bids Classified)

SURPRISE BIDS fall into two main groups, according to their object, as follows:

1. Surprise bids that attempt to conceal weakness.
2. Surprise bids that attempt to conceal strength.

SURPRISE BIDS TO CONCEAL WEAKNESS

The word *weakness* is here used advisedly in the sense that a hand may contain 8 or more playing-tricks *at one's own or partner's bid*, and yet be practically worthless against opponents' bids. The very fact that such hands contain a very long suit of a freakish two-suiter makes it all the more probable that opponents will score game even at very high bids. The problem with such hands is as follows:

A player holds a hand which, defensively speaking, is weak, but at his own bid can be carried very high with but a small penalty loss. Opponents, however, will not accept a sacrifice bid unless they expect a heavy penalty, or unless they are afraid they cannot go game at their own bid. To coax them into making a premature Penalty Double, or into believing that game at their own bid is improbable, is the object of surprise tactics.

Hands which are defensively weak can be camouflaged in two ways:

(a) By an original pass for a swing, from which the opponents gain the impression that the hand is weaker than it actually is.

(b) By aggressive bidding, from which the opponents gain the impression that the hand is stronger than it actually is.

A student of psychology will at once perceive that, in life, persons suffering from excessive development of the inferior-

ity complex also choose between excessive timidity and emphatic aggressiveness.

In Contract Psychology a master player, when confronted with a hand which, although possessing some elements of strength, is obviously inferior in other respects, subconsciously resorts to the same tactics. A super-player, however, will modify his tactics according to the *expectations* of his opponents, striking when least expected.

PASSING FOR A SWING

Delayed bids, or the suppression of a long powerful suit by a pass, have already been discussed in general.

The number of beautiful situations that can be created by skilful use of the pass is too great to enumerate in detail. The natural inference from a pass is one of general weakness. Consequently, by unmasking the batteries after a previous pass, situations of surprise are created—the secret of successful camouflage bidding. However, before deciding to pass a hand for surprise purposes, it must be carefully weighed, for if it is too strong in honours the pass will defeat its own purpose, as the chances are that all hands will be passed out; and if it is too weak, it cannot stand the stress of Penalty Doubles, which will very likely be made.

The bidding on hands with long powerful suits and no defence should be mixed—sometimes a pass; at other times, a Pre-emptive four-bid (or a five-bid if in a minor suit); finally, when playing against very astute opponents, the best way to surprise them is simply by opening with a bid of one.

AGGRESSIVE TRICK BIDS TO CONCEAL DEFENSIVE WEAKNESS OF THE HAND

The method of passing to conceal hands with powerful single suits can easily be overworked, especially against astute opponents. There is the danger that a delayed bid will be recognized from the fact that the suit is bid high; as a result, far from being fooled into a premature Double, the opponents will be encouraged to push their own bids. In order to trap successfully the better class of players, many

trick bids are not based on a pass but on an aggressive display of bluff strength. The psychological situation for a trick bid must be so deftly selected that the opponent, who is naturally expecting the unexpected, will be taken by surprise. The difficulty here is easily comparable to the subtle art of fly-fishing in the trout streams of Scotland. Unless the player's preparations are carefully timed, the desired climax will not be brought about—much to the player's perhaps deserved chagrin.

The reader will find a description of some of the 'psychic' or trick bids—all based upon the truculent aggressiveness, not of a bully, but of a subtle strategist—in the following pages.

THE INHIBITORY NO-TRUMP OVERCALL

A bluff one no-trump Overcall without a stopper in the opponents' bid suit is one of the simplest and most effective means of checking the opponents from bidding for game or Slam.

When First Hand opens with, say, one spade, and Second Hand overcalls with one no-trump, the normal inference is that the no-trump shows a hand of general strength, including at least one stopper in the bid suit. This obvious inference furnishes the basis for a surprise attack. The situation arises when partner has passed, Second Hand opens with a suit bid, and it is evident to the Third Hand, who is not vulnerable, that the opponents will reach game. This 'psychic' or inhibitory one no-trump bid *anticipates* that the opponents' hands are too strong to pass. After the one no-trump is overcalled or doubled, as expected, the disguised 'escape' suit is brought into the bidding and pushed up. Sometimes a 'double-barrelled' psychic will be used when a bluff bid, in order to sound more convincing, is repeated. The object is to induce the opponents to give up bidding for game (or Slam) and be content with a small penalty. They naturally reason that after a no-trump bid a game is far from being certain. Finally, even if the opponents contract for game, they may easily be influenced to take wrong

finesses—especially in trumps. Against keen players the inhibitory no-trump should be abandoned in favour of a strong no-trump—until such time as they begin to assume too much.

An expert player will sometimes carry the camouflage to two and even three no-trump until the opponents double, after which he produces his 'out' suit.

To illustrate:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
Pass	1 ♠	1 N T

North holds:

♠ 6 ♥ 10 7 5 ♦ A K J 9 7 4 3 ♣ K 5

This type of surprise bid is in accordance with the principles of safety laid down in the foregoing pages. It is reasonable to assume that the bidding will continue, but, should all pass, the hand is played at one no-trump undoubled, not vulnerable, as a rule, and no serious harm can result. If, as expected, partner of the spade bidder raises the bid, and perchance partner of the bluff no-trump bidder also bids, the powerful diamond suit *offers a safe escape or 'out'*.

It cannot be repeated too often that unless a player has a safe 'out', attempts to surprise opponents by camouflage bidding will, as a rule, end in disaster. In the Culbertson System, the Take-out Double, the Penalty Pass and the Penalty Double of a one-bid furnish effective defence. The main danger lies not so much with the opponents as with partner. With the above hand, the diamond suit is sufficiently powerful to stand the stress of being bid twice or three times if partner, who has been partly misled by a bluff no-trump, persists in bidding.

The ideal situation for a bluff no-trump Overcall arises when a player is not vulnerable and partner has passed. Partner cannot be seriously misled, and, in such situations, the bluff no-trump can be made on hands of but average strength and without the requirement for a stringent escape suit as above.

The intervening no-trump or suit Overcall after the Vanderbilt-club bid is a powerful defence. It causes the

opponents to lose the precious round of lower one-bids and forces them to feel out their suit distributions starting from uncomfortably high bids of two.

After partner has passed, a weak Opening suit bid of one with a long suit but little outside strength in the position of Third Hand is also, at times, successfully used.

BEST DEFENCE AGAINST BLUFF ONE NO-TRUMP OVERCALLS OR OPENING BIDS

With hands containing more than 2 honour-tricks, double for penalties if opponents overcall, and for a Take-out if an opponent has opened the bidding. The Rule of Eight will tell the story.

BLUFF REDOUBLE OF A TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

No score

Both sides vulnerable

	♠ Q 9 5 4 3 2	
	♥ —	
	♦ 10 8 6 4	
	♣ 7 5 2	
♠ J 10	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> NorthEast </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> WestSouth </div> </div>	♠ 6
♥ A 10 8 5		♥ Q J 9 6 3
♦ A J 7 3 2		♦ K 5
♣ A 9		♣ Q 8 6 4 3
	♠ A K 8 7	
	♥ K 7 4 2	
	♦ Q 9	
	♣ K J 10	

The Bidding:

(Dealer)

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Double	<i>Redouble!</i>	2 ♥
Double	Pass	2 ♠	3 ♣
Double	3 ♥	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All pass		

Remarks: North's Redouble is camouflage. Four spades were made. Adversaries could have made five hearts. Had North made a Pre-emptive bid even of four spades, it would have been hopeless, since East would certainly have over-called.

BLUFF OPENING BIDS OF ONE NO-TRUMP

When not vulnerable, an Opening bid of one no-trump is often the most effective means of discouraging vulnerable opponents who have strong hands. When this bid is based upon a fairly strong rescue suit and not too greatly shaded honour strength, it is usually productive of excellent results regardless of the fact that the distribution of the hand may be entirely unfavourable to actual no-trump play. The following deal, which the author played in a team-of-four match at Crockford's Club, New York City, illustrates the effectiveness and safety of such a bid.

South—Dealer
East and West
vulnerable

♠ A 9 5		♠ K 10 8 6 3
♥ Q 10 8 2		♥ K 6
♦ K 8 3		♦ 10 4 2
♣ J 10 4		♣ 8 5 2
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> North West East South </div>	
		♠ Q 7 2
		♥ A J 5 4
		♦ 9 6
		♣ A Q 9 7
		♠ J 4
		♥ 9 7 3
		♦ A Q J 7 5
		♣ K 6 3

The Bidding:	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
	1 N T	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
	Pass ¹	Pass		

¹ South (the author) was only too happy to pass two spades. Had North held a very weak hand, and East and West chosen to double the one no-trump bid for penalties, a two diamond bid would have been a safe refuge. Had North made a Forcing Take-out, the author would unhesitatingly have bid three no-trump. The

hand contains 2 honour-tricks and two Knaves—but little less than the normal minimum of 3 honour-tricks.

It will be seen that East and West could have made four hearts, yet neither of them ever had a safe opportunity to bid.

SEMI-SHIFT BIDS¹

A Semi-Shift bid is made when, over an adverse no-trump, a shorter and much weaker suit is bid when a stronger suit is held in reserve.

The idea is to coax further no-trump bidding from the opponents. The disadvantages of the Shift bid are obviated, for, if partner repeatedly raises the suit mentioned originally, he will have four or five trumps, which permits of the bid being played. And, if the adversaries pass, the hand can be played with but slight loss.

To illustrate:

(Dealer)

SOUTH

1 N T

WEST (not vulnerable)

2 ♣

West holds:

It might be argued that a pass would be more effective in inducing opponents to bid further at no-trump. The peculiar psychology of many players would more quickly induce them to bid two no-trump in order 'to show a stopper' after opponents have shown, presumably, their best suit, than after a pass. Still others would conclude from the two club bid by West that he was not strong enough to double and therefore held merely a Defensive Overcall.

The Semi-Shift bid is used occasionally instead of the regulation Double when it is not expedient to disclose the real strength of the hand. It conceals strength when a Double would disclose it.

More important yet, the threat of a possible Semi-Shift inhibits the opponents and affords added protection for

¹ The bluff Redouble of a Take-out Double, the Shift Raises and the Semi-Shift bids were originated by the writer.

situations in which an Overcall of the opponents' no-trump bid is made on hands of simple defensive strength.

SHIFT RAISES

When, although holding powerful trump support in partner's bid suit, a player bids repeatedly some other weak suit, and finally the adversaries double, whereupon the raising player *now* reverts to partner's suit, the idea is to coax the adversaries to double the real suit, giving the appearance of 'running' from the Double. The bid is used when it is apparent that the opponents will contract for a game or Slam. A further advantage of the Shift Raise is to force the opponents into believing that a game or a slam at their own bid is not very probable. The following hand, which was played at The Whist Club, New York, is a typical example of a Shift Raise:

Both sides vulnerable

Score: West-East 90

West-East play the Vanderbilt System

South-North play the Approach-Forcing System

Standard: All advanced players

West has shown a slight weakness for premature Penalty Doubles.

♠ A K J 9 8	<table><tr><td></td><td>North</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>West</td><td></td><td>East</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>South</td><td></td></tr></table>		North		West		East		South		♠ Q 10 6 5 4 2
		North									
West			East								
		South									
♥ A 2		♥ Q 8 3									
♦ Q	♦ 2										
♣ K 10 9 8 7	♣ A J 6										

♠ —	♠ 7 3
♥ K 9 7 6 5	♥ J 10 4
♦ A K 10 9	♦ J 8 7 6 5 4 3
♣ Q 4 3 2	♣ 5

<i>The Bidding:</i>	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
	Pass	1 ♣ ¹	Pass	1 ♦
	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♦? ²	2 ♠
	3 ♣! ³	3 ♠	Pass	Pass
	4 ♣! ⁴	Double	4 ♥	4 ♠
	5 ♦	Double	Pass	5 ♠ ⁵
	6 ♦ ⁶	Double	All pass	

South and North made a Small Slam doubled—a difference of more than 3000 points.

Bidding Analysis:

¹ The one club bid and the one diamond response are the conventional Vanderbilt System bids.

² The Overcall with two diamonds by North was very risky. It offered, nevertheless, a precious opportunity to inaugurate his psychological offensive.

³ After partner's two diamond bid, the situation seems more hopeless than ever. Against the opponents, South can count a diamond, a heart (or a club) and a spade, at the most. His only chance lies in forcing opponents to double him at four or five diamonds and take a justifiable loss. Such a double can be induced only if the opponents can expect a large penalty, and that is possible only if they can be made to reason that South is hopelessly trapped and tries to escape. Hence, the bid of three clubs, which, of course, is perfectly safe.

⁴ To bid four diamonds would be premature. First, a Double of four clubs must be coaxed, so that the shift to diamonds is concealed under the appearance of trying for a rescue.

⁵ The five spade bid by East is very good. He knows South to be an expert player who, behind spectacular trappings, conceals a fundamental soundness.

⁶ The six diamond bid is daring and brilliant. By this time it becomes evident from Rebids and Raises that the enemy holds a very probable Slam in spades. To push them into a Slam would be disastrous indeed. South reasons correctly that East, having warned his partner *twice*, will be compelled to pass. In the play a spade is led and ruffed, then ♦ K, and ♦ 10, which is overtaken by ♦ J. Now ♥ J, which is covered by ♥ Q, then ♥ K, won by ♥ A in West's hand. West should lead a club and set the contract 1 trick. He has a hard problem, however. If North holds ♣ A and one small, he lets it run to the Queen and makes his bid. He

chooses (mistakenly, the writer believes) to lead a spade so as to take out the last re-entry.

The Slam was made due to good luck. This in no way diminished the brilliance of the bidding, designed to create doubt in the opponents' minds as to the real strength of the hands and to force the Double for a 'paying loss'.

A CAMOUFLAGE PENALTY DOUBLE

A player holds a singleton in the adverse trump bid. The opponents have contracted for a game, and the decision is very close whether they will make it or not. The player now makes a hair-trigger Double for penalties, as light as a cream puff, in order to confuse the opponents and disguise the location of trump and other key cards in the event that opponents have finesses to take.

This Double is possible only when there is perfect partnership defence, but it will often prove to be the only means of saving the game.

RIGHT PRINCIPLES AT THE WRONG TIME

The foregoing analysis of various types of surprise bids will not be complete without a brief description of those pseudo-psychological attempts which deservedly terminate in disaster.

Psychological and camouflage bids are generally associated in the mind of the average player with the so-called fake bids on voids or singletons, or bluff bids without even a semblance of playable strength. Nothing is further from the truth. The following types of bid are conspicuously absent from the repertoire of a truly great player:

Fake Bid No. 1: A Shift bid:

A smart Aleck player of the pseudo-psychological school, very common in certain circles, with a hand such as

♠ 3 ♥ A Q J 9 7 6 4 3 ♦ A 9 7 3 ♣ —

will initiate the 'attack' with a bid of one spade, a truly brilliant bid indeed. The usual result is that an opponent with spades bunched in his hand passes or, worse still, the bidding thereafter runs amuck. Our would-be psychologist

finally pulls the rabbit from his hat in declaring with a poker face his real suit, hearts. Partner 'rescues' hearts into spades, of which he holds a goodly number. Our strategist eloquently warns partner by rushing back to hearts, and the opponents, seeing that the enemy is missing the signals, double. Partner of our tactician, even though suspecting a fake bid, cannot afford to take a chance on a pass, and goes back to spades, whereupon the contract is increased still more in hearts, so that, toward the end, the hand is helplessly played in the neighbourhood of a Slam bid and is heavily penalized.

However, there is one bidding situation in which a bid with only a singleton or a doubleton of the unbid suit may prove to be good strategy: when preparing for a Slam bid and trying to prevent the opponents from leading that suit. Again, the bid should be *reversed* against a keen opponent who, expecting you to make such a bid, will lead the very suit you have made a bluff bid in.

Fake Bid No. 2: Bluffing oneself into a trap:

Opponents open with one heart; Second Hand, holding something like

♠ 9 7 5 2 ♥ J 10 6 ♦ A 9 6 4 ♣ K 4

bids a bluff one no-trump. As a result, the opponents double and collect a heavy penalty. Our pseudo-psychologist has not a ghost of a chance for escape, as there is no 'out' suit. He must suffer in dignified silence.

Fake Bid No. 3: A Bluff Redouble of a Penalty Double:

Opponents double a contract and it looks as though they will collect a fair penalty. The situation is desperate. Our tactician suddenly has an inspiration. He redoubles to drive the opponents back to their own bid. They stay put, of course.

There are several other bids equally as stupid as the three just named.

PARTNER'S PROCEDURE IN SURPRISE TACTICS

There is but one rule for partner to follow when confronted with surprise tactics. He must always assume normality and draw his inferences accordingly. *Until definite*

inferences point to the contrary he must not be on the look-out for possible bluff bids by partner nor allow this possibility to influence his bidding.

DEFENCE AGAINST SURPRISE TACTICS

To assume, without being certain, that the opponent is bluffing is fatal. It is not a paradox to state that the real object of surprise bids is to make the opponents believe, when holding truly 'strong hands', that the player is bluffing and then to call the 'bluff'.

Therefore, until definite inferences point to the contrary, *the opponents' bids must be respected.*

The best defence lies in precise partnership bidding. The players should promptly double the opponents' bids or redouble their Take-out Doubles if holding the necessary values—especially one no-trump bids. A process of elimination will usually disclose that the balance of honour strength is held by partner, and therefore that the apparently strong bids of opponents are bluffs. (See the Rule of Eight.)

Besides, there are only a few bidding situations in which the risk of 'psychic' bids may be justified, and therefore they should be expected.

WHEN TO BE ON THE LOOK-OUT

One should be on the look-out for 'psychic' bids whenever the following situations occur:

1. When the opponents are not vulnerable and one of them passes. This situation is most commonly seized upon for 'psychic' bids or Doubles for the reason that it offers the maximum degree of safety.¹ Justifiable surprise bids by the player who is vulnerable are rare. If partner has not passed,

¹ There are many situations in which the pass is the best and only defence. Unfortunately, in Contract the pass loses much of its sting when the player is not vulnerable. The writer, while fully recognizing that there must be a legitimate place for surprise tactics based on finesse and subtlety, does not believe that grossly exaggerated bluff bids belong to the game. The most powerful defence against coarse bluff bids, such as fake bids on suits of which a singleton only is held, is a pass.

the danger of deceiving him is too great to warrant the risk of a surprise bid.

2. When an opponent overcalls partner's bid suit with one no-trump and subsequently bids a suit. Here the fact that he failed to double is significant.

3. When an opponent strongly bids up his suit after a previous pass.

In conclusion, the situations which logically justify the making of a 'psychic' bid are relatively few and can be clearly marked. The 'psychic' or camouflage bids which can pass through the meshes of fine partnership bidding are fewer still. Perhaps the main value of surprise tactics lies in creating a feeling of uncertainty in the minds of the opponents and in hampering the natural development of their bidding. They will quickly learn that against a certain class of opponents the bidding becomes heavy with uncertainty and hard to pull. The easy flow of valuable information from the enemy's camp has stopped or become confusing.

If, in defence against surprise tactics, a player makes the fatal error of ignoring them, and, treating them as bluff, proceeds to bid high, the opponents will then wait with strong hands *disguised by bluff bids* to exact the toll of heavy penalties. In this manner the effect of surprise bids is felt both directly and indirectly in a more subtle way.

CHAPTER XXVI

CONCEALING STRENGTH FROM OPPONENTS

FAR MORE valuable than camouflage tactics, to conceal defensive weakness of the hand, are tactics to conceal honour strength. Penalties make up a very large proportion of profits, and the only way to obtain large penalties is by concealing as much as possible one's strength in order to induce the enemy to expect less in their opponents' hands and more in their partners'.

Hands which contain 3 or more honour-tricks cannot be passed for a swing originally without serious risk that the remaining players will also pass; nor can one, as a rule, indulge in Semi-Shift bids or Shift Raises. There remains, with few exceptions, but one way to conceal one's strength and surprise the opponents—by bidding as low as possible. Forcing Take-outs and two-bids apparently contradict this principle; here, however, the overwhelming honour strength makes it highly improbable that opponents will do much bidding.

Most of the other so-called 'strength-showing' optional or artificial bids, current with many systems, are a polite warning to the enemy not to fall into the trap or not to commit suicide on the score. This applies especially to indiscriminate Opening no-trump bids when made with strong hands and in preference to the strength-concealing suit bids. Similarly a player, whose Opening one-bids in a suit or no-trump *are known to be strong*, gives up thereby a large share of penalties which otherwise would accrue to him. Nor can he relieve the situation by occasional 'psychic' Opening bids, for his partner is naturally attuned to strength and length waves and will act accordingly.

The principle governing all methods of concealing strength is very simple: Tell partner only what is strictly necessary

to keep him going; to start with, conceal the excess of strength from the opponents.

In most other systems it is the Opening Hand who shows as much as possible the full strength of his hand at once, and partner who 'assists'; in the Approach-Forcing System the Opening Hand, as a rule, shows only the strict minimum, and partner must first show his strength. Partner is given just enough information to keep him afloat; the opponents, however, must guess.

The usual advice to 'encourage partner and discourage opponents' is diametrically reversed to read, 'With good hands discourage partner and encourage opponents.'

In the Approach-Forcing System the principle of concealing strength from the enemy permeates the entire bidding. Only a few situations, therefore, need describing.

The attempt to conceal strength begins with Opening one-bids and with suit bids preferably. The range of honour-tricks held varies from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 and sometimes even $5\frac{1}{2}$. Partner must assume, to start with, about 3. The balance, if available, is concealed.

Let us take a hand such as

♠ A Q 10 7 3 ♥ A 3 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ A J 4

The proper bid with this hand is one spade, in spite of its great strength. A two-bid would be superfluous with this distribution. If partner has not about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, the hand will rarely score game; if partner has about $1\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks, he will keep the bidding open after a one spade bid. In the meantime a powerful hand is concealed from the opponents, who, because unwarned, may eventually be trapped.

THE MENTAL LEVEL OF THE OPPONENTS

As with partnership bidding, one must adjust one's psychological tactics to *the mental level of the opponents*. Not only must a player adjust himself to the mental level of individual opponents and, so to speak, jump into their mental skins and clearly visualize the process of *their* expected guesses, but at each stage of the bidding he must ask him-

self what their opinions and guesses about him are. According to their scope of perspicacity, one's psychological tactics will vary in complexity. The same psychological set-up will not work against an inferior, average or very superior intelligence. A player's entire method of bidding may have to be temporarily shifted.

For instance, a certain player, after watching my game, assumes that I am of the overbidding type. He gears up the doubling accordingly and proceeds to double me right and left. Having observed this—how quickly will depend on my intelligence—I shall naturally tighten up considerably on the bidding and, especially for his benefit, my bids in future will be extra sound. The answer to his Doubles will be successful Redoubles until he is practically brow-beaten.

There will now occur a psychological readjustment in his opinion and attitude toward my overbidding. After weeks of play he is *forced* to conclude that his original opinion was wrong and that I am really a very conservative player. He therefore abstains from doubling me. I therefore proceed to overbid until after several weeks he is once more *forced* to begin doubling, whereupon I shall once more shift my tactics. Just how quickly he will notice my shift, and shift in turn, will depend on his mental alertness. This illustrates psychological strategy as a whole, and not merely in reference to an individual kind of surprise bid.

There is a constant ebb and flow of imponderables between players around the table. To seize these imponderables by the horns, so to speak, and make them work for you and against the opponents—and in spite of the opponents—is the final problem of Contract psychology.

CONCEALING STRENGTH AFTER A TAKE-OUT DOUBLE BY THE OPPONENTS

The First Hand opens with one spade and Second Hand doubles. If Third Hand holds

♠ 6 4 ♥ A Q 9 7 ♦ A 10 9 2 ♣ Q J 5

his proper bid is a Redouble informing partner at once

that a possible heavy penalty is in sight. To conceal strength in this situation would lead nowhere, as opponents will probably stop bidding. If, however, First Hand opens with one club and Second Hand doubles for a Take-out, a Redouble by the Third Hand with a strong hand is a waste of ammunition, especially if opponents are not vulnerable, for they can easily escape with any suit bid of one, and in the meantime they have been warned of the danger. The better plan would be to pass, and wait and see.

PASSING FOR A TRAP AFTER FORCING OR ARTIFICIAL BIDS

After a Forcing bid or an artificial one club bid the best defence with strong hands is also a pass. Since the bidding is guaranteed to be kept open, it is obviously more advantageous to allow the opponents to proceed unwarned. Assume that Dealer opens with an artificial one club. If Second Hand is very strong, he can obviously afford to pass and thus temporarily conceal his strength, since Third Hand must respond. With a hand of average strength, however, his best plan is to bid at once, for otherwise he may easily be shut out. The same principle applies against all One Over One systems.

These waiting tactics will work only when there is at least a reasonable certainty that the bidding will be kept open. It is a fallacy to lie in wait with a strong hand when the chances are that the bidding will not continue.

After an opponent opens with one no-trump, not vulnerable, and the Second Hand holds a hand such as

♠ A Q J 5 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A Q J 8 ♣ K J 4

it is the height of naivete to make a 'trap' pass in the foolish hope that the opponents will bid higher and even contract for a game. The opponents will probably play the hand at one no-trump or two in some suit, and either go down one or even make a part-score. A Double will at least bring in a part-score, and possibly a game, not counting the possibility of a stiff penalty should partner make a Penalty Pass.

TRAPPING OPPONENTS WITH PRE-EMPTIVE FOUR-BIDS

The inference conveyed by a Pre-emptive (shut-out) four-bid in a major is that the player fears the opponents, and, holding a very long trump suit with no defensive strength, is attempting to shut them out. The 'weakness' inference usually conveyed by such bids will serve as a basis for surprise when an Opening four-bid is made occasionally on powerful hands.

For instance, with

♠ K 5 3 ♥ A K Q J 8 2 ♦ K Q 10 6 ♣ —

a 'surprise' four-bid is made. The opponents, assuming weakness, may overcall with disastrous results.

These tactics have the added advantage of protecting weak Pre-emptive four-bids. Distributional four-bids when not deftly mixed with bids of four on strong hands will soon lose their effect upon opponents and even become a boomerang. It is one thing to overcall a Pre-emptive four-bid when made by a wooden player and quite another to take one's life in one's hands and gamble by overcalling an Opening four-bid if made by a keen Contract psychologist.

The only disadvantage of such strength-concealing bids is that at times a Slam is missed, which would have been reached had partner not been misled as to the real strength of the hand. To minimize this disadvantage, the time to make such a bid is when partner has passed.

With the hand above the astute player would bid four hearts, even as Second Hand, after Dealer's pass. The possibility of *driving* the Third Hand into a five club bid, when the Fourth Hand may hold quite a few clubs, is too tempting.

CONCEALING DISTRIBUTION

Consider the following bidding:

(Dealer)

SOUTH

1 ♥

WEST (not vulnerable)

Double

West holds:

♠ A 10 8 ♥ QJ 10 8 7 ♦ A K J 9 ♣ 3

The object here is to coax a Rebid of hearts by the opponents. A Take-out Double usually denies strength in the doubled suit. It may encourage the opponents to rebid in order to save a part-score; if so, the bid can be doubled.

If partner (East) bids two clubs, then West bids two diamonds if there is no intervening bid.

ANOTHER WAY OF CONCEALING DISTRIBUTION

Consider also this bidding situation:

Both sides vulnerable

(Dealer)

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Double	2 ♠	Pass
Pass	4 ♥	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Redouble	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Five odd was made by South-North. North held:

♠ 10 9 8 7 6 ♥ — ♦ A Q 10 9 7 4 ♣ 4 2

North's (Mrs. Culbertson's) bidding, apparently erratic, is very subtle. After West's Double, North decides not to try for a Slam unless partner can rebid.

North considers her freakish distribution and, reasoning that very probably the bidding will be kept open, misleads West by giving a feint *minimum Raise of two spades*. Her subsequent Raise to four spades looked like a sacrifice. She was reasonably certain that West would either pass the Redouble (in the event of his doubling) or that South, who made an Opening bid, had some strength in hearts—especially after East failed to support West's heart bid.

BIDDING GRADUALLY IN ORDER TO CONCEAL A SLAM HAND

Attempts to conceal, whenever feasible, really powerful hands have as their object to induce and coax the opponents, who do not suspect unusual strength, to take a gambling chance that may result in a heavy penalty. There are a few situations, however, in which the object of concealing the

actual strength of the hand is to prevent the opponents from making a 'sacrifice' bid that will rob the Opening Hand of a successful Slam. As long as the opponents believe or are induced to believe that there is a fighting chance to defeat a Slam contract, they will not attempt a sacrifice overbid.

The problem with some very powerful hands is to bid up gradually, and let it appear on the surface that the player, instead of 'raring to go' is being pushed—apparently unwillingly. To inform the enemy obligingly that a Slam is practically a certainty is simply to invite them to make desperate overbids which often prove to be successful. The remarkable hand below illustrates, at one and the same time, the bid that is psychologically the worst ever made (see West), and another bid which is one of the best ever made. Harold S. Vanderbilt sat in the North position. The fact that this hand resulted from a Goulash¹ deal merely brings into bolder relief the psychological principles of Contract tactics.

Goulash deal

Both sides vulnerable

Vanderbilt System played

	♠ —				
	♥ A K Q J 10 9 8				
	♦ K				
	♣ A Q J 10 9				
♠ A K Q J 10 9 8					♠ —
7 6 5 4 3 2					
♥ —					♥ 7 6 5 4 3 2
♦ —					♦ 5 4 2
♣ —					♣ 6 4 3 2
	♠ —				
	♥ —				
	♦ A Q J 10 9 8 7 6 3				
	♣ K 8 7 5				

¹ Goulashes are no longer indulged in among better Contract players.

	(Dealer)			
<i>The Bidding:</i>	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
	3 ♦?	7 ♠??	7 N T!!	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

Analysis: South has many ways to bid his hand—including a pass. In the writer's opinion he did not choose the best. No matter. The seven spade bid by West is one of the worst in Bridge history. The player saw victory in his grasp, as apparently opponents had no escape. The far-away thought never occurred to him that the Grand Sam bid when he was vulnerable was precisely the one bid to give the whole show away. North's seven no-trump was a stroke of genius because of its very simplicity. Many might have thought of doing it—especially after it was all over. Mr. Vanderbilt did it.

It is not necessary to go more exhaustively into the practical application of the principle of *concealment of strength*. It is sufficient to remember that in Contract it is even more important to conceal one's strength than to disguise one's weaknesses. Players who can do neither might as well play with their hands always exposed.

Contract is a game of exacting inferences plus a factor *x*—the alluring Unknown Quantity in men and in cards that lends the game its irresistible fascination.

GLOSSARY

I. GLOSSARY

Editor's Note: The principles and methods underlying Mr. Ely Culbertson's modern theory of cards, as originated by him and applied to Auction and Contract Bridge bidding and play, from 1922 to 1933, are in many respects so revolutionary and new that a great number of new terms, now household words among Bridge players, were coined by Mr. Culbertson. In this glossary, the words or terms marked by a star (*) were originated and used for the first time by Mr. Culbertson in the sense here given to express his new ideas. Unless otherwise stated, the terms here defined are used in Contract Bridge, or in both Auction and Contract Bridge, in the senses given.

Above the line. All scores in Rubber Bridge entered above a horizontal line on the score sheet, which includes penalties and the premiums for honours, Slams, rubbers, and overtricks; all points scored other than for tricks; the premium score.

Ace. The highest ranking card of a suit.

Ace-showing. A convention in bidding, used by some players when approaching a Slam to show control of the first round of an unbid suit. See Four-Five No-trump Convention.

**Adequate trump support.* The minimum holding in partner's bid suit to justify the Responding Hand in raising partner's Opening suit bid of one or two. For a number of years the adequate (or, as then called, 'average' or 'normal') trump

support consisted of three small trumps or a Queen with a small card. With the introduction of the Culbertson four-card suit principle, adequate trump support became four small trumps (x x x x) or at least a Queen and two small cards (Q x x).

Adversary. Either opponent of the Declarer.

Adverse suit. A suit bid by the opposing side.

**Approach-Forcing System.* See Culbertson System.

**Approach principle.* The Culbertson precept that whenever a hand contains a biddable suit (even a four-card minor) the suit should be preferred to no-trump as the Opening bid. The same principle applies to responses with suit bids of one. This principle was first developed in the game of Auction

Bridge, and with the introduction of Contract was combined with the Forcing principles as the basis of the Culbertson (Approach-Forcing) System of Contract bidding. As a logical result, an entirely new range of four-card suit bids, Raises and other revolutionary bidding methods, were developed.

Auction. The period during which it is open to the players to bid in rotation for the contract, beginning when the deal is finished, and ending when any call other than a pass is followed by three passes in turn.

Auction Bridge. The form of Bridge which was the immediate predecessor of Contract Bridge in the partnership games of the Whist family.

***Balance of strength.** The honour strength adversely held, which a player may determine by adding the honour-tricks in his own hand to the minimum shown by his partner's bid and subtracting the total from 8. The result will closely approximate the honour strength held by the opponents. This principle is developed from the application of the Rule of Eight, invented by the author and first published in 1929.

***Balanced patterns.** Hands of the one-suiter type, containing no second four-card or longer suit. With balanced patterns, the scope of trump plays is

limited, and most of the advantages inherent to trump plays are lost. Balanced patterns include the following distributions: 5-3-3-2, 4-3-3-3 and 6-3-2-2. They form an important part of the Culbertson Modern Theory of Distribution.

Below the line. At Rubber Bridge the score (for tricks bid and made) recorded below the horizontal line on the score sheet. The score which counts both toward winning a game and winning a rubber.

Bid. A call by which a player offers to contract that his side will win at least as many odd-tricks (1 to 7) as his bid specifies, provided the hand is played at the denomination he names.

Biddable suit. A suit containing not less than four cards, and at least the minimum strength to justify a bid in it.

Bidding to the score. Modifying one's bid because of a part-score, which reduces the number of odd-tricks necessary for a game contract.

Big Slam. A Grand Slam.

Blank hand. A hand devoid of honour strength, containing no card higher than a nine; a bust; a Yarborough.

Bland suit. A void.

Block. (1) To hold up the master card of the opponents' suit. (2) To fail to unblock partner's suit by retaining a

high card which prevents the run of it.

Bluff bid, Double, etc. See *Psychic bid*.

Bonus. Points scored above the line for winning a rubber, for holding honours, or for bidding and making a Slam. See *Premium score*.

Book. For Declarer, the first 6 tricks; for adversaries, the amount of the Declarer's bid subtracted from seven.

**Borderline bid.* A hand with strength barely requisite to justify a bid—in the twilight zone between a pass and a bid.

Bridge. The name popularly used to designate the game of Contract Bridge.

Bridge Whist. The forerunner of Auction Bridge in the Whist family of partnership games, played with a Dummy and with a trump determined by the Dealer or his partner.

Business Double. A Penalty Double.

Business Pass. A Penalty Pass.

Bust. Slang for a blank hand.

Call. A comprehensive term applicable to a bid, a Double, a Redouble, or a pass, or to making any of these calls.

Calling a card, a suit, etc., as a penalty. The privilege of compelling an opponent to lead or play a certain card or a certain suit, or to play his highest or lowest, or to win or lose a trick.

**Camouflage.* A call which disguises the make-up of the player's hand. This term, much used in Auction Bridge, has largely been superseded in Contract by the term 'psychic' bid (which see).

Card. See *Playing Card*.

Card Reading. The art of drawing correct inferences as to the distribution of suits in all the hands, and the ability to locate important honours from the bidding and the fall of the cards.

Cash in. To lead one or more winning cards; usually, to lead all one's winning cards; to run a suit.

Closed hand. The hand of the Declarer, as distinguished from the Dummy's 'open' hand.

Club. The lowest ranking of the four suits, represented by the symbol ♣.

Contract. (1) The final bid made in the auction, undoubled, doubled or redoubled. Any call other than a pass, if followed by three passes in turn, determines the contract. (2) The game of Contract Bridge.

Contract Bridge. The form of Bridge in which only odd-tricks bid and made can be scored below the line toward winning a game.

Contracting. A popular term for the auction.

**Count (4-5-6).* A scale by

which the trick expectancy of the combined declaring hands at no-trump may be determined. Thus, with favourable distribution, 4 honour-tricks in the combined hands will average to produce either 6 or 7 tricks in the play, 5 honour-tricks will average to produce 8, and 6 honour-tricks will average to produce 9 tricks, or game.

Count (4-3-2-1). A method of reckoning the honour-strength of a hand by counting the Ace as 4, the King as 3, the Queen as 2 and the Knave as 1. The chief advocate in the United States of the use of this count for no-trump bids and Raises is Mr. Milton C. Work.

Cross-ruff. To ruff first in one hand and then in the other. See Ruff.

**Culbertson (Approach-Forcing) System.* The most generally used system of Contract bidding, especially by experts, the characteristic features of which are as follows: (1) determining the best bid in the combined partnership hands by approaching with low suit bids, and also (2) responding, when possible, with suit bids in preference to no-trump until the fit of the hands is ascertained (One Over One); (3) the use of no-trump as a negative response; (4) the requirement of at least Q x x or x x x x for adequate trump support; (5) the use of Forcing

bids on hands of sufficient strength; (6) the Penalty and Take-out Doubles; (7) Higher Strategy of Bridge Distribution (and the Law of Symmetry); (8) Culbertson Method of Slam Bids. See Approach principle, Forcing principle, Adequate trump support and Negative no-trump.

Cut. To separate the pack into two stacks and put the bottom portion on that removed from the top for the purpose of changing the order of the cards. The cut is made by the player on the Dealer's right, prior to the deal.

Deal. To distribute the cards one by one to the players in turn. Legally, a deal extends from the cut to the moment when the last card has been duly placed on the table.

Dealer. The player who deals the cards.

Deck. See Pack.

Declaration. A call; see also Denomination.

Declare. To call; see Call.

Declarer. The player who first for his side makes a bid of the denomination named in the contract. He plays both his own cards and those of his partner (Dummy).

**Defending Hand.* The hand that makes a call after one of the opponents has opened the bidding, or, in the play, one of

the opponents of the Declarer; loosely, any player who is defending against an adverse contract, either in the bidding or the play.

Defensive trick. An honour-trick, or any card or card combination that may be expected to win a trick if an opponent becomes the Declarer.

Denial bid. A bid other than partner's to show possible lack of support for partner's Opening bid. Ordinarily the most eloquent denial is a pass. See Deny.

Denomination. The suit or no-trump named in a bid.

Deny. To bid another suit, thus implying possible lack of support for partner's bid. See Negative no-trump.

Deuce. The two-spot; the lowest card of a suit.

Diamond. The second lowest ranking of the four suits, represented by the symbol ♦.

Discard. To play a card which is not of the suit led and which is not a trump, as distinguished from following suit or ruffing.

**Distribution.* The practical and scientific analysis of different types (patterns) of suit and hand distribution for the purpose of discriminating between bids and selecting the best bidding methods. This use of the term followed far-reaching discoveries which brought about

the introduction of modern four-card suit bids, the development of the Approach principle, and the devising of logical new methods of Raises and Take-outs to replace the old-fashioned ways. In its present sense, the development of the theory of distribution was begun by the author in 1922. See Patterns.

**Distributional count.* A method of estimating the expectancy of long-suit tricks and short-suit tricks (the latter only in the Responding Hand).

**Distributional values.* The value of long suits and short suits; first discussed by the author in 1922.

Double. A call which has the effect of doubling or otherwise increasing the resulting score in the event that the last preceding bid becomes the contract.

Double Jump. A bid of two more than necessary to take out

Double Raise. A Jump Raise increasing partner's bid by two-odd, as a Raise of one spade to three spades.

Doubler. A player who has made a Double.

Doubleton. An original holding of only two cards of a suit.

Draw. (1) A procedure for determining partners or the Dealer or both, in which each players draw a card at random

from a shuffled pack spread face down on the table. The highest card determines the Dealer; the next highest, the Dealer's partner. (2) See Exhaust.

Dummy. (1) The Declarer's partner after he has placed his cards face up on the table. (2) The cards held by the Declarer's partner; the Dummy's hand.

Dummy's hand. See Dummy (2).

Duplicate. A form of Bridge in which the same hands are played more than once by different pairs of players.

Entry. A taking card which permits entry into a hand; a re-entry.

**Escape suit.* A suit which a player may bid as an escape if he is doubled after making an inhibitory no-trump or a bluff bid.

Established suit. A suit in which the holder can take all the remaining tricks if he can lead it or if it be led.

Exhaust. To draw all cards of a suit from the hand of any player. A player becoming void of a suit during the play is said to be exhausted of that suit, as distinguished from holding no cards of that suit originally. See Void.

Extra trick. An overtrick.

Finesse. A manoeuvre for position; a method of playing tenace combinations which

gains a trick or tricks if the position of the outstanding adverse honour or honours is favourable.

Following suit. Playing a card of the suit led.

**Force.* (1) In the bidding, to make a call which requires both partners to keep the bidding open until game or a worth-while penalty is reached. (2) In the play, to lead a card which an opposing player must ruff in order to win the trick.

**Forcing bid.* A bid which requires both partners to continue the auction until game or a worth-while penalty is reached. See Forcing principle.

**Forcing pass.* In certain bidding situations a pass which may be deduced as meaning that a player desires to give his partner the option of bidding further or doubling the adverse contract for penalties.

**Forcing principle.* The principle underlying the Culbertson method of insuring that the bidding will not die showing great honour strength and indicating the strong probability of game or Slam, provided the best bid for the combined hands is chosen. There are eight Forcing situations in the Culbertson System: (1) An Opening bid of two in a suit made when great honour strength is held in one hand, usually $5\frac{1}{2}$ honour-tricks or, with exceptional distribu-

ion, 5 honour-tricks. (2) A Jump Take-out of one more than necessary in a new suit made by the Responding Hand with 3½ or more honour-tricks, showing honour strength divided in two hands. (3) A Jump Rebid of one more than necessary in another suit made by the Opening Hand (showing 4½ honour-tricks) on the next round after a Regulation Take-out from partner (if partner passes and an intervening opponent bids, a Jump Rebid by the Opening Hand is not Forcing). (4) An Immediate Overcall in an opponent's bid suit, which, if partner has not bid, is a Forcing Take-out, showing great honour or distributional strength, or both, and equivalent to a gigantic Take-out Double. It may show a singleton in the opponent's suit. (5) An Overcall of an adverse Opening bid of four or five in a suit with the necessary number of no-trump, requiring partner to take out in his longest unbid suit. (6) Any

five no-trump bid. (8) Inferential Forcing bids.

**Forcing Rebid.* See Forcing principle, Forcing situation (3).

**Forcing System.* See Culbertson System.

**Forcing Take-out.* See Forcing principle, Forcing situation (2).

**Forcing two-bid.* See Forcing principle, Forcing situation (1).

**Four-card suit bids.* An enlargement of the available bids in Auction and Contract; first advocated by the author and discussed editorially by Josephine Culbertson in *Auction Bridge Magazine* in 1924. Through the use of four-card suit bids, the choice of bids was greatly enlarged, and the best contract for the combined hands more readily reached.

**Four-Five No-trump Convention.* A method of wholesale Ace-showing used in approaching Slam bids, presented for the first time in the Culbertson System of 1933.

Freak hand. A hand in which the distribution of the cards is unbalanced. See Balanced patterns.

Free bid or response. A bid made when an adversary has kept the bidding open for partner, and which therefore implies greater strength than would be shown by bidding over an intervening opponent's pass.

Free Double. The double of a bid which, if made undoubled,

Free Raise. A Raise given after an intervening bid by an opponent, implying more strength than a regulation Raise, which might be made on shaded strength merely to keep the bidding open.

Game. A score of 100 points

or more below the line for one side, made in one or more deals uninterrupted by a game score of the opponents. Whenever a side scores a game, a line is drawn across both scoring columns, and both sides start afresh scoring toward the next game.

Goulash. A kind of deal sometimes played (by mutual agreement) when a regular deal is passed out. Starting with the original Dealer, the players in turn place their sorted hands face down on the Dealer's. The pack is then cut but not shuffled, and dealt in rotation five at a time for two rounds and three at a time for the third round. Freakish hands commonly result.

Grand Slam. (1) In Auction Bridge, the winning of 13 tricks by a side. (2) In Contract Bridge, a fulfilled contract to take all 13 tricks. The premium score, not vulnerable, is 1,500 points; vulnerable, 2,250 points.

Guard. One or more lower cards which protect an honour or cards which prevent the adverse run of a suit.

Hand. (1) The period extending from the cut to the close of the play. (2) The cards held by any player. (3) The complete distribution of cards in the four hands of a particular deal.

Heart. The second highest

ranking suit, represented by the symbol ♥.

High-Card Trick. A term used originally by Mr. Culbertson to denote a trick won with an honour. The corresponding new term is 'honour-trick' as distinguished from 'low-card' or 'distributional' trick.

Honours. (1) In scoring honour premiums, the Ace, King, Queen, Knave and Ten of the trump suit, or the four Aces at no-trump. (2) In the rank of cards, the Ace, King, Queen, Knave, Ten of any suit.

Honour-Score. The score (above the line) which counts toward the winning of a rubber, but not toward the winning of any game: the premium score.

**Honour-trick.* The primary unit by which the defensive value of a hand is estimated. The primary honour-trick is the Ace of any suit, and other honours are given values in accordance with their average trick-taking expectancy against any contract. See Table of Honour-tricks, page 42.

Inference. (1) A conclusion drawn from a call made by partner or an opponent. (2) A deduction as to card distribution from the bidding or play of a suit.

**Inferential Forcing bid.* A bid which while technically not requiring partner to respond,

actually demands a response through the logic of the situation developed in the bidding.

Informatory Double. A loose term for a Take-out Double.

**Inhibitory no-trump Overcall.* A no-trump Overcall of an adverse Opening suit bid in order to create a false impression of the distribution of honours, made by Defending Hand when holding a good suit for escape, if doubled.

Initial bid. An Opening bid.

Jack. In American usage, the Knave, the fourth highest honour.

Jump bid. A call higher than necessary to take out or overcall.

Jump Overcall. A suit bid of at least one more than necessary, made by the Defending Hand.

Jump Raise. A Raise of more than one; a double or triple Raise.

**Jump Take-out.* A bid in another suit or no-trump higher than necessary to take out, made by a player whose side has opened the auction.

Jump Trump Rebid. A Rebid of a player's original suit, one higher than necessary, made over any Jump bid by partner, and showing a near-solid six-card or longer suit.

Junior Adversary. The player

to the right of the Declarer, as distinguished from the Senior Adversary.

King. The second highest ranking card of a suit.

Knave. The Jack, the fourth highest ranking card of a suit. This is the term commonly used in England and continental Europe, and in the author's writings.

**Law of Symmetry.* Part of the modern theory of cards developed by the author. By applying this law, the pattern of the hand can frequently be determined with great accuracy. '*That fascinating novelty, the law of symmetry, is entirely Mr. Culbertson's own conception.*'—R. F. Foster, *Vanity Fair*, 1924.

Lead. (1) To play the first card of a trick. (2) The right to play the first card of a trick, belonging, for the first trick, to the player at the Declarer's left, and, for each subsequent trick, to the winner of the preceding trick.

Leader. The first player to any trick.

Little Slam. (1) In Auction Bridge, the winning of 12 tricks by one side. (2) In Contract Bridge, a fulfilled contract to take 12 tricks. The premium score, not vulnerable, is 500 points; vulnerable, 750 points.

Long Cards. Cards of a suit remaining in a player's hand

Major tenace. At the beginning of the hand, the Ace-Queen of a suit; later in the hand, the highest and third highest remaining cards of a suit, when the second highest card is adversely held.

Master card. The highest unplayed card of a suit.

Mental play. The inferred placing of cards during the auction through calls made by partner and opponents; a prediction of trick-taking power, provided a particular bid becomes the contract.

Minimum response. (1) A response to partner's bid which denies greater strength than theretofore shown, provided the player has previously bid.

**Negative no-trump.* A Take-out in no-trump (minimum) by the Responding Hand, made primarily for the purpose of permitting the Opening hand to bid again, and usually denying the possession of any values that may be biddable further. In its most usual form, the negative no-trump is a Take-out of an Opening suit bid of one with 'one no-trump', denying a sound Raise and showing the lack of even a Regulation suit Take-out.

Non-Jump Take-out. Same as Regulation Take-out.

No-trump. A denomination contracting to play the hand with no trump suit; that is, all four suits are plain suits at a no-trump contract.

Not vulnerable. The status of a side which has not won a game toward the rubber.

Odd-trick. Each trick won or contracted for by the Declarer in excess of his book.

One Over One. A response to a bid of one in a suit with a call of one in a higher ranking suit, which usually requires the Opening bidder to bid again if his hand contains any Rebid values whatever; an essential part of the Culbertson System, used by some players of the System as absolutely Forcing for one round of bidding. See Approach principle.

Open hand. The Dummy's hand, exposed on the table, as distinguished from the 'closed' hand of the Declarer.

Opening bid. The first bid made at any deal (not a pass).

Opening call. The first bid or pass made at any deal.

**Opening Hand.* A term used by the writer to designate the player who makes the Opening bid of any deal. His partner is called the Responding Hand; either of his opponents, the Defending Hand.

Opening lead. The lead to the first trick of any deal, always made by the Senior Adversary.

Opponent. An adversary.

Original bid. An Opening bid.

Overbid. (1) A term used by

the writer to mean a sacrifice bid, or any bid higher than justified by the bidder's holding. (2) An Overcall.

Overcall. (1) Any legal bid by the Defending side after an opponent has opened the auction. (2) To make a bid higher than the last preceding bid.

Overcall in opponents' bid suit. A call in a suit which has previously been bid by an adversary. See Forcing principle, Forcing situation (4).

Over-ruff. To play a higher trump than that played previously to a trick.

Overtrick. Each odd-trick won by Declarer in excess of his contract.

Pack. A set of fifty-two standard playing cards, divided into four suits (spades, hearts, diamonds, clubs) of thirteen cards each, ranking from the Ace down to deuce.

Part-score. A trick-score of less than game (100 points), counting toward game unless the opponents meanwhile score a game; if, after making a part-score, a side does not win the game before the opponents make a game, the part-score counts toward the rubber total only. See Game.

Pass. A call which conveys that the player does not on that occasion bid, double or redouble.

Pass out. To discard a deal passed by all four players, no player having made an Opening bid. The cards are mixed and shuffled, and the deal passes to the left for the next hand.





**Pattern.* The distribution of the suits in a particular hand; the basis of the Law of Symmetry. The 4-3-3-3 is a balanced and sterile hand pattern.

Penalty. (1) An advantage accruing under the laws to one side by reason of a breach of the laws by the other side. (2) Points scored above the line by the Defending side for setting the Declarer's contract one or more tricks.

**Penalty Double.* A Double made with the expectation of defeating the adverse (doubled) contract, thereby increasing the penalty suffered by the contracting side and similarly increasing the score for the Declarer if he makes his contract doubled.

Penalty equivalent. An expected penalty to be made by defeating an adverse declaration which is approximately equal to or greater than that which might be scored at one's own bid.

Penalty Pass. The pass of partner's Take-out Double, showing definitely a certain expectation that the adverse (doubled) contract can be defeated for a substantial penalty.

Pip. The symbol on a playing card or in printing used to designate the suit to which a card belongs. The four pips are    .

Plain suit. A suit that is not the trump suit.

**Plastic Valuation.* A method of estimating the trick-taking possibilities of a hand by visualizing the winners and losers, the probable fit with partner's hand, etc., as distinguished from any arithmetical and arbitrary count. First discussed in *Contract Bridge Blue Book*, September, 1930. See *Mental Play*.

Playing card. A standard card used in playing Bridge and other games.

**Playing-trick or winner.* A card or card combination which can be counted upon as a winner, provided the denomination bid becomes the contract. Any expected trick to be won in the play, including honour-tricks, long-suit tricks, trump tricks, ruffing-tricks, etc.

Points. The amounts scored above or below the line for each side.

Post-mortem. A discussion of the bidding or play of a hand after the conclusion of the play.

Pre-emptive bid. An Opening suit bid of three or higher, generally implying a hand of a rigid type with a wealth of

playing-tricks, but which offers little or no defence against an opposing contract at another denomination.

Preference bid. A bid made to show preference for one suit over another, when partner has bid two suits, as distinguished from any bid which shows supporting strength.

Premium score. The score (above the line) which counts toward the winning of a rubber, but not toward the winning of any game; commonly called the honour-score.

Psychic bid. A bid made for psychological effect, not justifiable by the values in the hand, but designed to mislead the opponents; an inhibitory bid; a bluff or surprise bid. Any call may be psychic, including a Double for a Take-out, Redouble of a Take-out Double or a strategic pass. The principles of Psychology in Bridge were for the first time scientifically developed and presented by Mr. Culbertson in his classic work *Contract Bridge Blue Book* published in 1930 and since translated into twelve languages

Queen. The third highest ranking card of a suit.

Quick-trick. The term for a trick won with honours, estimated according to a method of measuring the defensive strength of a hand; first used by the late Wilbur C. Whitehead.

The corresponding Culbertson term is 'honour-trick'.

Raise. (1) To support partner's bid. (2) An increase of partner's bid at the same denomination by one or more odd tricks.

Rebid. (1) A second (higher) bid at a denomination the player has named before. (2) To make any bid on second or later rounds of bidding, whether of the same denomination as before or not.

Redouble. A call having the effect of doubling a Double, multiplying the doubled penalty by two, or similarly increasing the Declarer's score if he makes his contract redoubled. Either opponent of a Doubler (but not his partner) may redouble a Double, provided no intervening bid has been made over the Double.

Re-entry. An entry enabling a player to get back into a hand to lead from it to the next trick.

Refuse (obsolete). To fail to follow suit. See Renounce.

Regulation Take-out. A simple (non-Jump) response to an Opening bid, made at another denomination.

Renounce. To fail to follow suit when able to do so; the term is now obsolete so far as the laws of Contract Bridge are concerned. See Revoke.

Rescue. To take out a partner

whose bid appears doomed to defeat, or to bid another suit after partner's bid has been doubled.

**Responding Hand.* The partner of the player who has opened the auction. See Opening Hand.

Response. A call (other than a pass) made by the Responding Hand, or by the partner of a player who has made a Forcing bid or a Take-out Double.

Revaluation. Estimating in the light of bidding information the trick-taking value of a hand (which has already been bid) in support of partner's Take-out or against an adverse contract.

Revoke. To fail to follow suit when able; to fail to follow suit or lead as required by the laws when able to do so.

Rubber. The succession of hands ending when one side has won two games. The side winning two games before the opponents win a game score a rubber premium of 700 points above the line; the side winning two games when their opponents have won one game score a premium of only 500 points above the line. If a rubber is not finished, and one side has won a game, that side is entitled to a premium of 300 points.

Rubber game. The third game

of a rubber when each side has previously won one game.

Ruff. To trump a lead of a plain suit, thereby winning the trick if no higher trump is played.

Ruffing-trick. An expected trick to be won by ruffing; a short-suit trick. Existent only at a suit contract, ruffing-tricks are not counted in the hands of the player who first names a suit, but only by his partner or (occasionally) by an adversary.

**Rule of Eight.* An invaluable guide in measuring the attacking and defensive values of the combined hands, particularly at no-trump. It is now universally used, following its first exposition in *Contract Bridge Blue Book*, September, 1930, as the most accurate method of determining the balance of honour strength. Concisely stated, the Rule of Eight is as follows: Of the 13 tricks in any deal, from 8 to $8\frac{1}{2}$ will be won with honours or honour combinations, the balance with low cards. The ratio of taking honour-tricks to low-card tricks is therefore 8 (sometimes $8\frac{1}{2}$) to 5 (sometimes $4\frac{1}{2}$), which is the 8:5 yardstick of tricks.

**Rule of Two and Three.* The expectancy of 2 tricks in partner's hand when vulnerable or 3 tricks when not vulnerable.

Run. To cash all the winning cards of an established or solid

suit, by playing them one after the other.

Sacrifice bid. A deliberate overbid made with the intention of accepting a 'paying penalty' rather than permitting the opponents to make an apparently sure contract.

Score. The trick-score plus the premium score for the same side.

Secondary bid. A bid made by a player who has previously passed.

**Semi-forced bid.* A bid made on shaded values with the primary purpose of keeping the bidding open for partner, especially in responding to an Opening bid of one, or to partner's Take-out of one.

**Semi-shift bid.* An Overcall in a short and weak suit made by a player holding a much longer and stronger suit.

**Semi-two-suiter.* A hand containing a biddable five-card or longer suit as well as biddable four-card suit.

Senior Adversary. The player at the left of the Declarer.

Sequence. Two or more cards of the same suit in consecutive order of rank, as K Q J 10 9, A K Q.

Set. To defeat the contract, giving the Defending side a penalty score above the line.

**Shaded biddable suits.* Suits

which do not measure up to the standard requirements as to honour strength, but which should occasionally be bid in preference to a less desirable call.

**Shaded Raise.* A semi-forced Raise. See Semi-forced bid.

Short suit. A suit of three cards or less in a player's original holding.

**Short-suit tricks.* A ruffing-trick, counted only in the Responding or sometimes the Defending Hand, possible at a suit but not at a no-trump contract, because of ability to ruff a card that would otherwise be a loser.

Shuffle. To mix the cards preparatory to dealing.

Shut-out. A Pre-emptive bid.

Side. Two players playing as partners.

Side suit. (1) A suit containing honour or distributional value and thus support for a declaration in some other suit. (2) A plain suit.

Sign-off. A bid which must be interpreted as a wish to close the partnership contracting at that point.

Simple Take-out. Same as Regulation Take-out.

Single Raise. A regulation (non-Jump) Raise, increasing partner's bid by only one odd-trick.

Singleton. An original holding of one card of a suit.

Slam. See Little Slam and Grand Slam.

Slam invitation. A Slam try.

Slam try. Any bid that implies a desire to play the hand at a Slam contract, provided sufficient values are held and the right contract is arrived at.

Small Slam. See Little Slam.

Solid suit. A suit of such length and strength that all tricks in that suit are winners.

S O S Redouble. A Redouble made to indicate weakness rather than strength; an imperative request that partner make another bid.

Spade. The highest ranking suit, represented by the symbol ♠.

Still pack. Of the two packs, customarily used in playing Bridge, the one shuffled while the other is being dealt, and set aside for the next deal.

Stopper. A card which will stop the run of a suit. See Guard.

Strategic Double. A Take-out Double made for its psychological effect on the opponents, rather than strictly for the purpose of showing strength.

**Strategic pass.* A pass of an opponent's bid, made with a view to letting the opponents

reach a contract which can be profitably penalized.

Strength-showing bid. Any free bid, as distinguished from a negative or forced response.

Suit. The thirteen cards of a kind; clubs, diamonds, hearts or spades.

Support. To raise.

Supporting Hand. See Responding Hand.

**Supporting-trick.* A term formerly used by the writer to designate all the tricks in the Responding Hand in support of partner's bid. The term 'playing-trick' or 'winner' is now used for expected tricks in all situations.

Surprise bid. See Psychic bid.

**Take-out.* A bid at another denomination by one's partner, as distinguished from a Raise.

**Take-out Double.* A call whereby a player, by doubling an adverse bid, requires his partner to bid. In the Culbertson System, any Double of not more than one no-trump or two in a suit is meant for a Take-out, provided partner has not previously bid and provided the Double is made at the first opportunity.

Tenace. A card with the next higher but one, or the next lower but one, of the same suit; more broadly, any combination of cards not in sequence in a

suit. See Major tenace and Minor tenace.

Touching honours. Two or more honours in sequence; see Sequence.

Trey. The three-spot; the second lowest card of the suit.

Trick. Four cards, one from each hand, one being led and the other three played by each player in turn. The highest card of the suit led, or (if a trump is played) the highest trump played to the trick, wins it.

Trick-score. The score (below the line) which counts both toward the winning of a game and the winning of a rubber.

Triple Raise. A Raise which increases partner's bid by three odd tricks, as jumping partner's bid of one heart to four hearts.

**Triple valuation.* The valuation of the same hand in three different ways, as follows: (1) at one's own bid; (2) in support of partner's bid; (3) against an adverse call.

Trump. (1) To ruff. (2) A card of the trump suit.

Trump suit. The suit named in the denomination of the contract (except no-trump, when there is no trump suit).

Trump trick. A playing-trick in the bid (trump) suit.

Two-suiter. A hand contain-

ing two biddable suits of five or more cards each.

**Unbalanced distribution.* A hand containing a singleton or a void, as 4-4-4-1, 6-5-2-0, etc,

Undertrick. Each trick by which the Declarer falls short of making his contract, scored in penalties above the line for the Declarer's adversaries.

Void. An original holding of no cards of a suit.

Vulnerable. A term applied to a side which has won a game. A vulnerable side runs the risk of incurring greater penalties for defeated contracts, offset by the possibilities of making greater premiums for Slams and doubled overtricks than a non-vulnerable side.

**Winner.* A card or card combination that may be expected to win a trick if the partnership secures the contract. See Playing-Trick.

x. A symbol used to designate any card, usually below a Ten, when the denomination of the card is of no consequence.

Yarborough. A hand which contains no card higher than a nine; a bust.

**Yardstick (8:5).* A rule by which the ratio of taking honour-tricks to establishable low-card tricks may be accurately determined. See Rule of Eight.

THE LAWS OF CONTRACT BRIDGE

1932

as agreed and promulgated by The Portland Club, 9 St. James's Square, London; The Whist Club, 9 East 62nd Street, New York; and La Commission Française du Bridge, 6 Place de la Concorde, Paris.

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION OF THE LAWS

IN THE Laws of Contract Bridge issued by the Portland Club in 1929 the hope was expressed that the differences between the American and British Codes for that game might in due course be harmonized. In that year the project of an international code of laws for Auction and Contract Bridge was mooted and discussed both in the Portland Club and in the Whist Club of New York, and at the request of the Whist Club a synopsis of the many differences between the respective codes was prepared in December of that year.

It has taken over two years of diligent discussion and some prolonged conferences to remove these differences. Early in 1931 the Commission Française du Bridge became a party in these discussions. A code of Bridge Laws agreed by these three parties may fairly be entitled 'International', as they are, respectively, responsible for the only Bridge Laws hitherto issued (with possibly one exception). The Portland Club hope that any body representing the players of any other country will appreciate that wider consultation would have made the work a task of many years.

The agreed code covers all the existing Bridge games—Auction, Plafond, and Contract—and will be applicable with little variation—probably confined to the scoring section—to any game of the Whist family which may hereafter be played.

Few players know how widely the English, French, and American laws have differed. Confining attention to differences which could reverse the result of a rubber, a comparison of the English and American laws produces at least 36 and a comparison of the American and French at least 50; and the minor differences are much more numerous. The English and French laws have differed more in form than in substance.

Improvement as well as assimilation has been an aim; and it is surprising, on reviewing the changes which have to be announced to our players, to see how largely new features predominate over pure adoptions from other codes.

The Portland Club wish to acknowledge the spirit in which those London Clubs whose representatives have helped on previous occasions have refrained from pressing their claims to co-

operate in this revision. Participation on this occasion would have proved an embarrassment in prolonging still further the already too protracted negotiations. They also tender their thanks to the members of the Whist Club of New York and of the Commission Française du Bridge, to whose valuable and unremitting labours much of the improvement in the laws is due.

THE SCOPE OF THE LAWS

THE LAWS are designed to define correct procedure and to provide an adequate remedy in all cases where a player accidentally, carelessly, or inadvertently disturbs the proper course of the game or gains an unintentional, but nevertheless unfair, advantage.

The laws are not designed to prevent dishonourable practices: consequently there are no penalties to cover intentional violations either of the laws of the game or of the principles set out in the supplement. It suffices to warn players against any of the careless words or acts which transgress those strict principles of propriety which all players should observe, for, when no penalty is prescribed, the moral obligation of compliance is strongest. Ostracism is the ultimate remedy where intentional offences are repeated.

The penalties are moderated to a minimum consistent with justice, and an offending player should be ready to pay a prescribed penalty graciously and cheerfully.

When these principles are appreciated, arguments are avoided and the pleasure which the game offers is materially enhanced.

THE LAWS

Words between brackets in the text of the laws are inserted to help the reader. They do not form part of, or affect the meaning of, any provision.

PART I. DEFINITIONS

i. **TABLE.**—The group of persons entitled to play the game at a table provided for the purpose, unless the context otherwise requires.

ii. **MEMBER.**—A person who has acquired title to play at a table either immediately or in his turn.

iii. **PLAYER.**—One of the four members who, for the time being, are entitled to play. Two play as partners against the other two, each pair constituting a side.

iv. **ROTATION.**—The order or succession of the game, which is from player to player to the left in the direction taken by the hands of a watch.

v. **TO DEAL.**—To distribute the cards in rotation to the players. A deal extends from the cut to the moment when the last card has been duly placed on the table.

vi. **THE AUCTION**—The period during which it is open to the players to bid in rotation for the contract.

vii. **THE PLAY.**—The period which begins when the auction closes and ends when the number of tricks won by each side has been determined, unless the context otherwise requires.

viii. **THE HAND.**—The period extending from the cut for a deal to the close of the play, unless the context otherwise requires.

ix. **CALL.**—A comprehensive term applicable to a bid, a double, a redouble or a pass.

x. **DENOMINATION.**—The suit or no-trump named in a bid.

xi. **BID.**—A call by which a player offers to contract that his side will win at least as many odd tricks (one to seven) as his bid specifies, provided the hand is played in the denomination he names.

xii. **DOUBLE.**—A call which has the effect of doubling or otherwise increasing certain of the points to be won or lost in the event of the last preceding bid becoming the contract.

xiii. **REDOUBLE.**—A call which has the effect of doubling the points which have been doubled or otherwise increased by a double.

xiv. **PASS.**—A call which conveys that the player does not on that occasion bid, double or redouble.

xv. **CONTRACT.**—The highest bid made in the auction, whether undoubled, doubled or redoubled.

xvi. **DECLARER.**—The player on the contracting side who first makes a bid of the denomination named in the contract. He plays both his own cards and those of his partner.

xvii. **DUMMY.**—The declarer's partner after he has placed his cards face upwards on the table.

xviii. **TRICK.**—Four cards, one from each hand, one being led and the other three played in one round of play.

xix. **TO LEAD.**—To select and place face upwards on the table the opening card of a trick.

xx. **TO PLAY.**—To select and place face upwards on the table one of the other cards to be comprised in a trick, unless the context otherwise requires.

xxi. **QUITTED TRICK.**—A trick which has been gathered and turned by a player on the side which has won it and from which the hand of the player has been removed.

xxii. **ODD TRICK.**—Each trick won by a side in excess of six.

xxiii. **OVERTRICK.**—Each odd trick won by the declarer in excess of his contract.

xxiv. **UNDERTRICK.**—Each trick by which the declarer falls short of his contract.

xxv. **TRUMP SUIT.**—The suit, if any, to which a higher trick-taking power attaches during the play of a hand. Each of its cards is a trump and ranks above any card of any other suit.

xxvi. **EXPOSED CARD.**—During the auction and the play this term is restricted to mean :

(a) any card dropped face upwards on the table, even though no other player can name it;

(b) any card dropped elsewhere than on the table when the offender's partner sees its face, but not when it is seen only by an opponent;

(c) any card so held by a player that his partner sees any portion of its face, but not a card so held that only an opponent can see it;

(d) any card held by a player if he has said anything indicating that he holds it;

(e) any card dropped face upwards on the table along with one which the player says he intended to lead or to play;

(f) the two last cards in the hand of an opponent of the de-

clarer, if, before that opponent has played to the twelfth trick, his partner has shown his last card; and

(g) any card which under any provisions in these laws may be treated as an exposed card (*laws* 43, 46 (2), 46 (5), 55 (1), and 56).

xxvii. TO FOLLOW SUIT.—To play a card of the suit led.

xxviii. REVOKE.—Failure to follow suit when able to do so, also failure to lead or play as duly required by or under these laws when able to obey such requirement.

xxix. HONOUR.—The ace, king, queen, knave, or ten of a trump suit or each of the four aces at no-trumps.

xxx. SLAM.—Grand Slam—the winning of thirteen tricks by one side; little slam—the winning of twelve tricks by one side.

xxxi. TRICK SCORE.—The score which counts both towards the winning of a game and the winning of a rubber.

xxxii. PREMIUM SCORE.—The score which counts towards the winning of a rubber but not towards the winning of any game.

xxxiii. VULNERABLE.—Exposed to higher penalties for unfulfilled contracts. The term is applied to a side which has won a game.

xxxiv. RUBBER.—The succession of hands ending when one side has won two games.

PART II

DISPOSITIONS PRELIMINARY TO THE RUBBER

FORMATION OF TABLES AND JOINING TABLES.

1. (1) A table has either four, five or six members. A table with six members is complete.

(2) Any candidate may at any time join a table which is not complete by signifying his desire to do so.

(3) A member of a table may join another table, but no one can be a member of more than one table at the same time.

PRECEDENCE

2. In the formation of a table, candidates who have not yet played have precedence over those who have played in regard to membership and also in regard to title to play in the first rubber. As between candidates with equal rights, precedence is determined by drawing cards.

DRAWING CARDS

3. (1) When cards are to be drawn, one shuffled pack is spread

face downwards on the table. Each person, entitled to draw, draws a card from the pack. If anyone exposes more than one card or draws one of the four cards at either end of the pack, he must draw again.

(2) Precedence or choice goes to the drawer of the higher card. If cards of equal rank are drawn, they rank downwards in the order—spade, heart, diamond, club.

SELECTION OF PLAYERS AND PARTNERS FOR FIRST RUBBER

4. If all members at a newly formed table have equal rights, all draw cards. That drawing serves for all purposes in the following manner—the four who draw higher cards play in the first rubber; the two with higher cards occupy alternate seats at the table and play as partners against the other two; the one with the highest card deals first.

In any other case the four who are to play in the first rubber draw for partners and deal.

SELECTION OF PLAYERS AND PARTNERS FOR SUCCEEDING RUBBER

5. At the end of each rubber place must first be made at the table for any member who is waiting to play, and, so long as the table is not complete, for any candidate who, before a card has been drawn for selection of players or partners, announces his desire to join the table.

In the selection from among those who played the last rubber of the two or more who are to continue playing, precedence is given to any who have played a less number of consecutive rubbers, and, as amongst those with equal rights, is determined by drawing cards.

The four members entitled to play then draw for partners and deal.

CHOICE OF PACKS AND SEATS

6. The dealer of the first hand of a rubber has the right to choose his seat and the pack with which he will deal. He may consult his partner, but having announced his decision, must abide by it.

PART III

THE SHUFFLE, THE CUT AND THE DEAL

SHUFFLING

7. (1) After the players are seated at the table for a rubber

the player on the dealer's left shuffles the pack which the dealer has chosen. Each player has the right to shuffle once. The dealer has the right to shuffle last.

(2) The pack must be shuffled thoroughly in view of all the players and so as not to show the face of any card. If the last shuffle has not complied fully with these requirements, any player before the deal starts may demand a new shuffle.

(3) During each deal the dealer's partner should collect the other cards, shuffle them and place them, as a pack, face downwards on his right, i.e., on the left of the player who will deal next; and this pack must then remain there until the next dealer takes it up for his deal.

CUTTING

8. (1) The dealer presents the pack to the player on his right who lifts off a portion from the top and places it towards the dealer beside the bottom portion. The dealer then completes the cut by placing the bottom portion on the top portion.

(2) If any player demands it, there must be a new shuffle and cut if:

- (a) the cut is not made by the proper player; or
- (b) the cut has left fewer than four cards in either portion; or
- (c) the face of a card is shown in cutting or in completing the cut; or
- (d) any player other than the dealer completes the cut; or
- (e) there is doubt as to the exact place in which the pack was divided, or as to which was the top portion; or
- (f) any player shuffles the cards after the cut; or
- (g) the cut is made before the play of the preceding hand has been completed.

DEALING

9. (1) The players deal in turn according to the rotation of the game.

(2) The dealer must deal the fifty-two cards into four packets, face downwards, one at a time in rotation, the first card being dealt to the player on his left.

(3) Any player dealing out of turn, or with the opponent's pack, may be stopped before the last card is dealt; otherwise the deal stands good as if made in turn, and the packs, if changed, remains changed.

(4) A player must not look at any of his cards until the deal is completed.

AN IMPERFECT DEAL

10. (1) There must be a new deal by the same player with the same pack if:

(a) the dealer omits to have the pack cut and any player draws attention to the error before the last card is dealt and before he looks at any of his cards; or

(b) during a deal any card is found to be faced in the pack; or

(c) during a deal a card is in any way exposed on, above, or below the table; this is subject to law 38 in any case where a player has violated law 9 (4); or

(d) the cards are not dealt into four packets, one at a time in regular rotation, beginning with the player on the dealer's left; provided that, if the dealer deals two cards at once or consecutively to the same hand, he may rectify the error before dealing another card; or

(e) the last card does not come in its regular order to the dealer; or

(f) a player picks up another player's hand and looks at it; or

(g) before play begins, or at any time during the hand, a player holds more than the proper number of cards and another less; but, if it can be shown that two cards have been played to a trick from one hand and none from another hand law 48 applies in place of this law (*see also law 49*).

(2) If during a hand it is found that the number of cards in the pack is incorrect, or that a duplication exists, there must be a new deal by the same player with a correct pack, but scores made as a result of previous deals are not affected.

PART IV. THE AUCTION

THE AUCTION AND ITS DURATION

11. (1) When the deal is completed, the dealer must open the auction by making a call; and, thereafter, each player in rotation must make a call.

(2) If in the first round of the auction all four players pass, the hand is abandoned, and the player whose turn it is to deal next deals, using the other pack.

(3) Otherwise the auction continues until a bid, double or redouble made by one player has been passed by the other three players, at which point the auction is closed.

BIDDING AND OVERBIDDING

12. Each successive bid must either name a greater number of

odd tricks than the last preceding bid or an equal number of a higher denomination (*see law 40—insufficient bid*). The bids of different denomination rank upwards as follows—clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, no-trumps.

DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING

13. (1) Any player in his turn may double the last preceding bid, if made by an opponent, or may redouble it if it has been doubled by an opponent. He is not required to name the bid he is doubling or redoubling. Doubling and redoubling affect the points to be scored for odd tricks bid and won, for overtricks and for undertricks (*laws 30, 31 and 32*), but not those for honours, for slams or for rubber. They do not affect the number of tricks in the bid nor its value for the purpose of the auction.

(2) A bid which has been redoubled may not again be doubled or redoubled.

(3) When a bid has been doubled, or doubled and redoubled, any player may in his turn make a further bid until the auction is closed by three successive passes.

(4) If in doubling or redoubling a player mentions an incorrect number of tricks, he is deemed to have doubled or redoubled the bid as made.

PASSING

14. A player who does not desire to make any other call passes (to avoid misunderstandings, this is best expressed by the words 'no bid').

THE FINAL BID AND THE DECLARER

15. The final bid in the auction becomes the contract, and, if a suit was named in it, that suit becomes the trump suit for the hand. The player who secures the contract and his partner become the contracting side, and that one of them who first made a bid of the denomination named in the contract becomes the declarer.

CORRECTING A MISNOMER

16. If a call is a misnomer and is shown to be such by the player amending it practically in the same breath, it stands as corrected. By a misnomer is meant a slip of the tongue and not a change of mind. Except in a case provided for by this law or by law 40 (*insufficient bid*), a player may not alter a call made by him.

INFORMATION AS TO CALLS MADE

17. (1) A player may ask to have previous calls restated:

- (a) during the auction when it is his turn to call, and
 - (b) after the auction is closed but before the opening lead is made.
- (2) After the opening lead is made a player may only ask what the contract is and whether, but not by whom, it was doubled or redoubled.

PART V. THE PLAY

THE OPENING LEAD AND THE DUMMY

18. When the auction is closed, the player on the left of the declarer leads a card. The declarer's partner then spreads his cards face upwards in front of him on the table, and the declarer plays both his own hand and that of this partner, who is thereafter known as the 'dummy'.

DUMMY'S RIGHTS

19. The dummy may not by act or word suggest any lead or play (*see law 50*), or call attention to an opponent's revoke, lead out of turn, or card exposure, or warn the declarer that he is about to lead from the wrong hand or tell him, except in reply to a question, which hand has the lead (*see law 51*): otherwise he has all the rights of a player, subject to the provisions of law 55 (4) (*inquiring as to whether a lead or play constitutes a revoke*).

SUBSEQUENT PLAY AND LEADS

20. (1) After a lead, a card is played from each hand in rotation, and the four cards thus played constitute a trick.

(2) The leader may lead any card. The other three hands must follow suit if they can, but, if unable to follow suit, may play any card.

(3) A trick containing a trump or trumps is won by the hand playing the highest trump. A trick containing no trump is won by the hand playing the highest card of the suit led.

(4) The hand winning a trick leads to the next trick.

LEAD OR PLAY—WHEN COMPLETED

21. (1) A card led or played, or named by a player as the card which he proposes to lead or play, cannot be taken back except as directed or permitted in these laws (*laws 45 and 46, leads out of turn; law 49, missing card found in a quitted trick; and law 55, correcting a revoke*).

(2) A card is deemed to have been led or played—

(a) by the declarer, when a card from his own hand has been quitted face upwards on the table or when he touches a card in the dummy's hand; but, if in touching a card in the dummy's hand he says 'I arrange' or words to that effect, or if he is manifestly touching it for some other purpose, such touching does not constitute a lead or play;

(b) by an opponent of the declarer, when a card has been detached from his hand and so placed or held that his partner sees any portion of its face.

GATHERING TRICKS

22. Each completed trick must be gathered and turned face downwards on the table by a player of the side winning it, and is deemed to be quitted when the player's hand is removed from it. The cards of each quitted trick should be kept together so that its identity can be readily established, and the tricks taken by a side should be arranged together in such manner that their number and sequence may be observed.

TRICK APPROPRIATED BY THE WRONG SIDE

23. A trick appropriated by the side which did not win it may be claimed or conceded at any time before the tricks have been put together for shuffling (*see law 46 (1, 2 and 3)—subsequent lead*).

INSPECTING QUITTED TRICKS

24. After a trick has been turned and quitted, the cards in it may be counted face downwards, but it may not be again turned and inspected before the end of the hand (*see law 53*) unless—

- (a) there is difference of opinion as to which hand won it;
- (b) it is found to contain an incorrect number of cards;
- (c) it is necessary to turn it in order to substitute a correct card (*law 55*); or

(d) a player who fears that he has revoked in it obtains permission to examine it before he or his partner has led or played to the next trick. An opponent may refuse such permission, but in that case his side cannot claim the penalty for an established revoke in that trick.

INFORMATION AS TO CARDS PLAYED

25. During the play of a trick and until it has been quitted, any player may require the players to specify which cards they have played.

HANDS NOT PLAYED OUT

26. (1) An opponent of the declarer may show any of his remain-

ing cards to the declarer for the purpose of claiming one or more of the remaining tricks, and such cards are not liable to be called unless the other opponent sees them.

(2) If the declarer claims or indicates by exposing his remaining cards or otherwise that some or all of the remaining tricks are his, he must leave his cards face upwards on the table, and make a complete statement as to how he intends to play the rest of the hand, including his intention in regard to the order in which he proposes to lead or play his cards, in regard to any finesse or the trumping of any doubtful winner, and in regard to any other material matter (*see law 54*).

He cannot call any cards which may have been exposed in consequence of his action, nor can his cards be called by an opponent.

No exposure of cards made in connection with such claim can be treated as an act establishing a revoke.

The declarer cannot be subjected to any revoke penalty for a play made after he has exposed his cards.

(3) If a claim, or a concession, of tricks has been accepted and all the players have in consequence exposed their cards, no player can claim that the play of the hand shall be continued. If a side has conceded a trick or tricks which it could not lose by any play of the cards, the other side cannot claim such trick or tricks.

(4) When a hand is not played out, the unplayed cards may be examined for the purpose of establishing a revoke.

PART VI. THE SCORE

POINTS TO BE SCORED

27. (1) Points are scored in respect of odd tricks and slams bid and won, overtricks, undertricks, honours and rubber.

(2) Points scored in respect of odd tricks bid and won are scored in a trick score; all other points are scored separately in a premium score (*law 55 provides that for all scoring purposes tricks transferred to pay the established revoke penalty rank as tricks won*).

POINTS WHICH WIN GAME

28. (1) A game is won by the side which, in one or more hands, first scores 100 points for odd tricks bid and won.

(2) The hand in which a side wins a game is played out and all points won therein are scored; but no trick score obtained by either side in that hand or in any preceding hand can assist towards winning the next game.

VULNERABILITY

29. The side which wins the first game becomes vulnerable for the remainder of the rubber. If the other side wins the second game, it also becomes vulnerable for the remainder of the rubber. Vulnerability affects the number of points scored for doubled overtricks, undertricks and slams, in the manner described in laws 31, 32 and 34.

TRICK POINTS

30. If the declarer fulfils his contract, his side scores for odd tricks bid and won—

- when clubs or diamonds are trumps, 20 points per trick;
- when hearts or spades are trumps, 30 points per trick;
- when there are no-trumps, 30 points each for the first, third, fifth and seventh odd trick, and 40 points each for the second, fourth and sixth odd trick.

These points are doubled in the case of a doubled contract and are quadrupled in the case of a redoubled contract.

OVERTRICK POINTS

31. If the declarer, in addition to fulfilling his contract, wins one or more overtricks, his side scores for each overtrick—

- when undoubled, a premium equal to the trick points he would have scored if he had contracted to win the trick;
- when doubled and not vulnerable, 100 points, when doubled and vulnerable, 200 points, both these points being doubled in the case of a redoubled contract.

UNDERTRICK POINTS

32. If the declarer fails to fulfil his contract, his side scores nothing for the tricks won by him, and the opponents score—
in not vulnerable contracts—

- undoubled—50 points for each undertrick;
- doubled—100 points for the first undertrick, 150 for the second, 200 for the third, and so on with an increase of 50 in each successive penalty;
- redoubled—twice the doubled points;

in vulnerable contracts—

- undoubled—the same points as in not-vulnerable doubled contracts;
- doubled—twice the undoubled points;
- redoubled—twice the doubled points.

PART VII
INFRINGEMENT OF LAWS AND PENALTIES

LOOKING AT CARDS DURING DEAL

38. If a player looks at any of his cards during a deal (*law 9 (4)*) and in consequence thereof a card is faced before the deal is completed, the player on his left, after looking at the cards already dealt to him, may elect that notwithstanding the exposure of such card (*law 10 (1) (c)*) there shall not be a new deal.)

CALL OUT OF TURN

39. (1) If a player makes a call, other than a pass before any bid has been made, when it is the turn of his partner or of the opponent on his left to call or, except to correct a misnomer (*law 16*) or an insufficient bid (*law 40*), makes a second and different call before the opponent on his left has called, that opponent may claim a new deal; and, if such player elects to allow the deal to stand, the out-of-turn call is cancelled and the auction proceeds as though it had not been made.

(2) If a player makes a call, other than a pass, when it is the turn of the opponent on his right to call, the auction reverts to that opponent and proceeds as though the out-of-turn calls had not been made, but the offender's partner must pass when next it is his turn to call.

(3) If, in either case, the player on the offender's left has called before attention has been drawn to the irregularity, the out-of-turn call must be treated as a call made in proper sequence.

INSUFFICIENT BID

40. (1) If a player bids a number of tricks insufficient to overbid the preceding bid (*law 12*) and fails to correct his bid before attention is drawn to the irregularity by another player, he must make his bid sufficient by substituting a higher bid of any denomination, and his partner must pass when next it is his turn to call.

(2) Until attention has been drawn to the irregularity or a call has been made by the player on his left, the offender may correct his bid by raising the number or tricks specified to the requisite number of the same denomination. If he does so, the bid stands as corrected and there is no penalty.

(3) If the player on the offender's left makes a call before attention has been drawn to the irregularity, the insufficient bid ranks as a sufficient bid.

CALL AFTER THE AUCTION IS CLOSED

41. If an opponent of the declarer makes a call other than a pass after the auction has closed, the declarer may call a lead from the partner of the offender the first time it is the turn of that player to lead.

OTHER ILLEGAL CALLS

42. If a player—

(a) bids eight or more odd tricks;

(b) bids doubles or redoubles when debarred by these laws from so doing;

(c) doubles his partner's bid;

(d) doubles or redoubles a bid which his partner has doubled or redoubled;

(e) names a wrong suit when doubling or redoubling; or

(f) makes any other call not recognized in these laws and not dealt with in laws 39, 40 or 41;

the player on the offender's left may—

(i) demand a new deal; or

(ii) disallow the call, in which case the offender is deemed to have passed; or

(iii) state that he allows the call to stand in the case of (a) or

(b). In the case of (a) a bid of eight or more tricks is then treated as a bid of seven odd tricks only.

CARD EXPOSED DURING THE AUCTION

43. If, after the deal has been completed but before the auction is closed, any player exposes—

(a) a single card of less than honour rank without intent to lead, the player who becomes the declarer, if he be an opponent of the offender, may either—

(i) treat the card as an exposed card during the play; or

(ii) prohibit the offender's partner from making his first lead in the suit of that card;¹

(b) a single card of honour rank, or a lower card with intent to lead, or more than one card, the player on his left may claim a new deal.

CARD EXPOSED DURING THE PLAY

44. (1) If after the auction is closed an opponent of the declarer

¹ A player revokes if, when able to lead or play as required, he fails to do so (*def. xxviii*).

exposes (*see def. xxvi*) a card from his hand other than a card which he is leading or playing, such card, except as otherwise provided in these laws,¹ must be left on the table as an exposed card, and the declarer, whenever it is the turn of the owner of the card to lead or to play, may call that card, i.e. require him to lead or play that card, even though it may not have been left on the table.

(2) The declarer cannot forbid the lead or play of an exposed card.

(3) A call to play an exposed card does not override the player's duty to follow suit, but the card remains an exposed card until played and may be called to any later trick.

(4) No penalty is incurred by the declarer or his partner for exposing cards after the auction has closed.

DECLARER LEADING FROM WRONG HAND

45. If the declarer leads from the wrong hand, either opponent may require him to lead from the correct hand, and in such a case he must, if he can, lead a card of the same suit;² but, if an opponent plays to the trick before the declarer withdraws the card wrongly led, the lead from the wrong hand must be treated as a correct lead.

LEAD OUT OF TURN

46. (1) If the declarer leads from either hand when it is an opponent's turn to lead, either opponent may require him to take the lead back, but he may not withdraw it unless an opponent requires him to do so.

(2) If an opponent of the declarer leads when it is not his turn to lead, the declarer, before he has played to the trick from either hand, may—

(i) call a lead or a suit named by him from the offending side when first it is an opponent's turn to lead,² and, if it is not an opponent's turn to lead, treat the card led out of turn as an exposed card until it becomes an opponent's turn to lead; or

(ii) treat the card led out of turn as an exposed card and, if the card is still an exposed card when next it is the turn of the

¹ See law 26 (1) and (2)—hands not played out; law 43 (§1)—card exposed during auction; law 44 (4)—cards of the contracting side; law 49 (1)—missing card; laws 51, 58 and 59—cases where penalty may lapse; and law 55 (1*b*)—cards played or led after a revoke and before its correction.

² A player revokes if, when able to lead or play as required, he fails to do so (*def. xxviii*).

offender's partner to lead, forbid that lead to be made in the suit of the exposed card;¹ or

(iii) treat the card led out of turn as a card led in turn.

(3) If a card is played to an out-of-turn lead by the other side, the incorrect lead must be treated as a correct lead, and, in a case where a card is so played from the declarer's hand to an opening lead by the wrong opponent, the declarer becomes the dummy and his partner becomes the declarer.

(4) If, after an opening lead by the wrong opponent, the declarer's partner exposes any of his cards before the declarer has selected the penalty, the latter may not exact the penalty specified in (2) (i) above.

(5) If the opponents of the declarer lead simultaneously, the correct lead stands and the card led out of turn is an exposed card.

PREMATURE LEAD OR PLAY

47. (1) If an opponent of the declarer—

(a) plays to a trick before his partner when in proper turn, his partner should play before him; or

(b) leads before his partner has played to the current trick; or

(c) shows any card in his hand to his partner before the latter has played to the current trick;

the declarer may require the offender's partner:¹

(i) to play the highest or the lowest card he holds in the suit led; or

(ii) to win the trick, by trumping if necessary; or

(iii) not to win the trick; or

(iv) to discard a card of a named suit;

but no such requirement can override the player's duty to follow suit.

(2) If the declarer, after leading from one hand, plays from the other hand out of turn, the fourth hand has the right to play before the second, and no penalty can be exacted by the declarer.

PLAYING WITH A SURPLUS CARD

48. If during the play of a hand it is found that a player has a surplus card due to omission to play to a trick:

(a) where the offender has led or played to a later trick, the declarer or the opponent on the declarer's left, as the case may

¹ A player revokes if, when able to lead or play as required, he fails to do so (*def. xxviii*).

be, may claim a new deal; but this penalty may not be enforced against the dummy's hand;

(b) where the play continues, the offender must forthwith remove a card from the redundant hand, and, if practicable, the card must be one which he could properly have played to the defective trick.

PLAYING WITH AN INCOMPLETE HAND

49. If after the completion of a deal it is found that one player has less, and no player more, than the proper number of cards, the missing card or cards must, if possible, be found, and:

(a) in the event of failure to find a missing card, or of its position when found being such as to show that it was not duly dealt to the player, there shall be a new deal;

(b) in any other event, including the case where a missing card is found in a quitted trick or in the other pack, the card shall be restored to the player. It cannot be treated as an exposed card, but in determining whether the player has revoked it is deemed to have been in his hand while it was missing. If a quitted trick contains more than four cards and there is doubt as to which card was included therein in error, the opponents may direct which card is to be restored to the deficient hand.

DUMMY SUGGESTING CARD TO BE PLAYED

50. If the dummy, by touching a card or otherwise, suggests the play of a card (*law 19*), the opponent on the dummy's left may require the declarer to play or not to play that card, unless such play would constitute a revoke.

DUMMY DRAWING ATTENTION TO IRREGULARITIES

51. (1) If the dummy in any way volunteers to tell the declarer which hand has the lead or warns him not to lead from the wrong hand (*law 19*), the opponent on the dummy's left may choose the hand from which the lead is to be made.

(2) If the dummy draws attention to any other irregularity to which he has no right to draw attention (*law 19*), the declarer can exact no penalty for that irregularity.

DIRECTING PARTNER'S ATTENTION TO POSITION OF TRICK

52. If the dummy or an opponent of the declarer before his partner has played to a trick and without being requested to do so,

directs his partner's attention to the trick in any way, as by saying it is his, by naming his card or drawing the cards towards him, the declarer or the opponent on the dummy's left, as the case may be, may require the offender's partner:¹

(i) to play the highest or the lowest card which he holds in the suit led; or

(ii) to win the trick, by trumping if necessary; or

(iii) not to win the trick;

but no such requirement can override the player's duty to follow suit.

LOOKING AT A QUITTED TRICK

53. If a player turns and inspects a quitted trick when not authorised by these laws to do so (*law 24*), the declarer or the opponent on his left, as the case may be, may select the suit from which the offending side is to lead when first it is the turn of that side to lead.¹

DECLARER CLAIMING UNCERTAIN TRICKS

54. If the declarer has claimed or indicated that some or all of the remaining tricks are his (*law 26 (2)*), either opponent may require him to play the hand in the way in which he has stated that it is his intention to play it, and, if he has not voluntarily made a complete statement in regard to his intended play, may require him to amplify it and thereafter any matter which his statement has left unsettled shall be settled as this opponent directs.

THE REVOKE

PENALTY IF REVOKE CORRECTED

55. (1) If a player revokes (*def. xxviii*) and corrects his error by withdrawing the card wrongly led or played before the revoke becomes established, he must substitute a correct card, and:

(a) if the wrong card belongs to:

(i) an opponent of the declarer, the latter may either treat it as an exposed card or require the offender to lead or play the highest or lowest card he holds in the correct suit;¹

(ii) the declarer's own hand, it may be taken up; and the opponent on his left, if he has played to the trick after the

¹ A player revokes if, when able to lead or play as required, he fails to do so (*def. xxviii*).

declarer, may require him to lead or play the highest or lowest card he holds in the correct suit;¹

(iii) the dummy's hand, there is no penalty, whether the revoke is corrected or becomes established;

(b) a card led or played by the non-offending side in the interval between a revoke and its correction may be taken back without penalty; but a correct card played from the hand of the offender's partner may not be taken back.

ACTS WHICH ESTABLISH REVOKES

(2) A revoke in any of the first eleven tricks, which has not been corrected by withdrawing the card wrongly led or played, becomes established when in right turn or otherwise:

(a) the offender or his partner leads or plays to the next trick, if the revoke was made in playing;

(b) the offender's partner plays to the trick, if the revoke was made in leading.

A revoke made in the twelfth trick never becomes established.

ENQUIRIES REGARDING POSSIBLE REVOKES

(3) Any player, subject in the case of the dummy to the provisions in (4) of this law, may question any other player as to whether his lead or play constitutes a revoke, but a question or the answer which should be made thereto, or the fact that a player has started a question or an answer, spoken any word or made any exclamation or gesture cannot be held to alter or postpone the provisions of sub-section (2) of this law.

(4) The dummy may question only his partner, and, if he does so after intentionally seeing any card in any other hand, his partner may not withdraw his card. If the dummy leaves the table without having intentionally seen any card in another hand, the opponents may not claim the penalty for an established revoke unless one of them has questioned the declarer before such revoke became established.

(5) An opponent of the offender, before a revoke is established, may demand that a correct card shall be substituted for the revoking card.

PENALTY IF REVOKE ESTABLISHED

(6) When a revoke has been established the trick stands as played, and, if attention has been drawn to the revoke, two tricks

¹ A player revokes if, when able to lead or play as required, he fails to do so (*def. xxviii*).

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won by the revoking side are transferred to the other side at the end of the hand.

For each subsequent revoke by the same side in the same hand, which becomes similarly liable to penalty, one trick is so transferred.

Provided always that no transfer shall include any trick won before the first revoke occurred, or any trick transferred from the other side under this law.¹

(7) Tricks so transferred rank for all scoring purposes as tricks won in play by the side receiving them.

CLAIMING AN ESTABLISHED REVOKE

(8) If an established revoke has been claimed with or without reference to a particular suit, the tricks may be inspected at the end of the hand to settle the claim, and, if an opponent of the claimant mixes the cards after such claim and before they have been fully inspected, the claim must be allowed.

(9) A revoke cannot be claimed after the cut for the next deal has been completed or the score of the rubber has been agreed.

PLAYING BEFORE OPPONENT HAS NAMED PENALTY

56. If a player leads or plays before an opponent, who is entitled to require him to lead or play in a particular way, has named the penalty, the opponent's right is not affected thereby, and the card led or played can be treated as an exposed card.

CLAIMING LEAD OF SUIT NOT HELD

57. If the player entitled to exact a penalty requires a lead, play or discard of a suit of which the opponent to whom his requirement is addressed has none, the penalty lapses.

CLAIMING UNAUTHORIZED OR DOUBLE PENALTY

58. (1) If a player claims a penalty to which he is not entitled, his side forfeits the right to exact any penalty for the irregularity.

(2) If a player has exacted the penalty or penalties available under one law, he cannot exact a penalty for the same offence under any other law.

¹ In certain cases, when a trick, in which an established revoke occurred, has been won by the non-offending side, inexperienced players may have difficulty in determining the sequence of tricks. In such a case the decision of a majority of the players, as to the number of tricks, shall govern; failing such decision, the number shall be determined by the non-offending side.

WRONG PLAYER CLAIMING PENALTY

59. If the dummy or the partner of the player solely entitled to claim a penalty for an irregularity claims a penalty or suggests which of alternative penalties is to be claimed, or, without being requested to do so, tells his partner what penalties are available, the right to exact any penalty for that irregularity lapses.

CALLING ATTENTION TO AN IRREGULARITY

60. Any player, subject as regards the dummy to the provisions of law 19, may call his partner's attention to the fact that an irregularity has been committed; but this in no way affects the condoning of the irregularity by his partner's call or play (*see law 39—call out of turn; law 40—insufficient bid; and laws 45 and 46 leads out of turn*). If requested to do so, he may also state the law on the subject.

MISSTATEMENT OF LAW

61. If a player, when requested by his partner or an opponent to state the law applying to a case in point, misstates the law, and the information so given remains uncorrected, although there has been ample time for correcting it, no penalty can be imposed for any irregularity attributable to such misstatement.

PART VIII. SPECIAL LAWS

These laws shall be in force when no variation or resolution to the contrary has been promulgated or agreed by the players concerned.

PRELIMINARY DISPOSITIONS—ADDITIONAL RULES

62. (1) In the formation of tables, precedence, as amongst those who have not yet played, shall be governed by the order in which they have entered the room; as between those who have entered together it shall be determined by drawing cards.

(2) If a member of a table consents to make up another table which cannot be formed without him, and announces his intention of returning to his former table when his place at the other table can be filled, his place at the first table shall be reserved for him. And, if he does not so retain his membership in the first table, he shall be the last to vacate his seat at the other table.

(3) If a player retires from a table, thereby leaving it with less than four members, he shall not be entitled to compete against any of the other players for entry into any other table.

(4) If only one table can be formed, and there are seven in the

room desiring to play, the membership of that table shall be increased to seven so long as these conditions obtain, and three players instead of two shall vacate their seats at the end of each rubber.

(5) At the end of each rubber 'table up' shall be announced for the benefit of any member who may be waiting to play or, if the table is not complete, any candidate for membership.

PLAYER OBLIGED TO LEAVE

63. Any player who is obliged to leave a table before the rubber is concluded may, with the consent of the other players, appoint a substitute. And if such consent be not given, or if it be impossible to find a substitute, the rubber shall be deemed to have ended by arrangement (*see law 35 (2)*).

QUESTIONS REGARDING RESULT OF A RUBBER

64. Any question depending upon the result of a rubber shall be decided by reference to the points won and not by reference to the games won, but it shall be treated as unsettled if the rubber is ended by arrangement (*law 35 (2)*).

CALLING FOR FRESH CARDS

65. Any player, after a hand has been played and before the pack has been cut for the next deal, may call for fresh cards at his own expense. He shall call for two new packs of which his opponents shall have the choice. But this law shall not apply in the case where damaged cards have to be replaced.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE LAWS

PROPRIETIES OF THE GAME

1. The nature of Contract Bridge and the conditions under which it is played are such that acts may be so done or words so spoken as to disturb the proper course of the game. In many cases players fail to appreciate when or how they are improperly conveying information to their partners. It is, therefore, desirable to warn all those who play the game that a player offends against the most important of its proprieties if he fails to avoid:

- i. Undue delay in making a call when there is no need to consider any other call.
- ii. Calling with special emphasis, inflection or intonation.
- iii. Varying the formulae used in calling.

- iv. Exceptional haste or reluctance in passing or in doubling.
 - v. An unnecessary request for a review of the calls already made in the auction.
 - vi. In any way attracting attention to the score, except when necessary to do so for his own information.
 - vii. Carelessly passing or playing out of turn.
 - viii. Giving by word, manner or gesture any indication of the nature of the hand held.
 - ix. Any remark, question or gesture from which an inference may be drawn.
 - x. Calling attention to the number of tricks needed to complete or to defeat the contract or to the fact that it has already been fulfilled.
 - xi. Giving during the hand unauthorized information as to any incident of the auction.
 - xii. Indicating in any way approval or disapproval of his partner's call or play.
 - xiii. Allowing his partner's hesitation, remark or manner to influence his call or play.
 - xiv. Any unnecessary request to place the cards played to a trick.
 - xv. Playing a card with special emphasis.
 - xvi. Undue delay in playing to a trick when the play does not need consideration.
 - xvii. Preparing to gather a trick before all four hands have played it.
 - xviii. Detaching a card from his hand before it is his turn to lead or play, e.g., a lead held ready before the partner has played to the current trick may indicate a desire to be left with the lead; and a lead held ready after leading a card may inform the partner that the card led, though not the highest, is a winner, and may be still more informative when the second lead is from a different suit.
 - xix. Volunteering information which should only be given in reply to a question.
2. For other reasons it is necessary to avoid with special care:
- i. Tilting cards upwards in the act of dealing or otherwise allowing any of them to be seen. This may cast upon another player a duty which it is not desirable to impose upon him.

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